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JONES

BRITISH THEATRE.

VOL. X.

CONTAINING,

I.

THE PROVOKED HUSBAND.

II.

ALL IN THE WRONG.

III.

THE JEALOUS WIFE.

IV.

THE WEST INDIAN.

D U B L I N :

PRINTED BY JOHN CHAMBERS,

FOR WILLIAM JONES, No. 36, DAME-STREET.

1795.

NO. 1. 2. 3.
BRITISH THEATRE

VOL. X.

CONTAINING

THE PROVOVED HUSBAND.



THE LEAGUE WITH

THE WEST INDIAN

D. E. L. N.

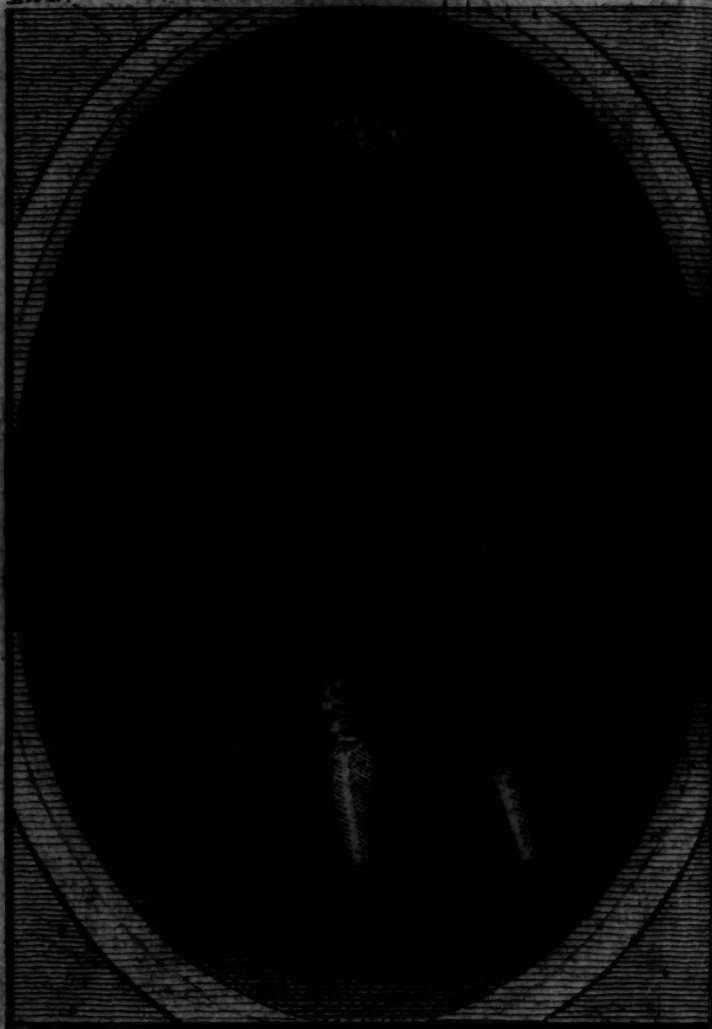
PRINTED BY JOHN CHAMBERS,

FOR WILLIAM JONES, No. 26, DAME STREET.

1795.



The PROVOKED HUSBAND.

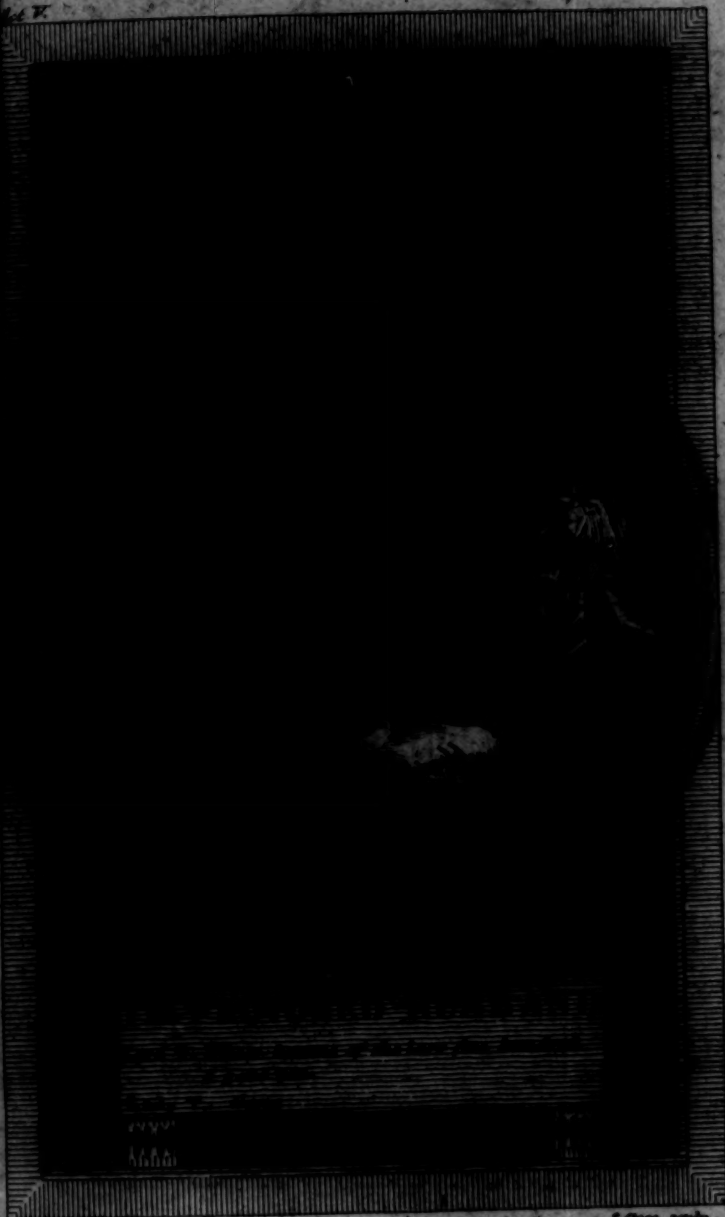


By W. Jones sculp.

J. A. G. sculp.

MR. WILSON or SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD
I don't know how 'twas—but I doubt I cried
Ay, when I should ha' cried No!

Dublin Published by W. Jones, N^o. 35, Dame Street.



Smirke pinx

J. Clark sculp.

Dublin Published by W. Jones, 1785, Dame Street.



THE
PROVOK'D HUSBAND;
(OR, A
JOURNEY TO LONDON.

A
COMEDY.

By *SIR JOHN VANBRUGH* & C. CIBBER, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRES-ROYAL,
DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS.

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY J. CHAMBERS,
FOR WILLIAM JONES, No. 86, DAME-STREET.

M DCC XCIV.

PROVOK'D HUSBAND;

JOURNEY TO LONDON

COMEDY.

By SIR JOHN VANBRUGH & G. GILBERT, ESQ.



THEATRE COLLECTION

BRUXELLES AND COVENT-GARDEN

REGISTERED FROM THE THEATRE

By Proctor & Co. Librarians

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY J. CHAMBERS

FOR WILLIAM JONES, NO. 22, DAME-STREET

IN THE CITY

TO THE
QUEEN.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

THE English theatre throws itself, with this play, at your Majesty's feet, for favour and support.

As their public diversions are a strong indication of the genius of a people, the following scenes are an attempt to establish such as are fit to entertain the minds of a sensible nation; and to wipe off that aspersions of barbarity, which the virtuosi among our neighbours have sometimes thrown upon our taste.

The Provok'd Husband is, at least, an instance that an English comedy may, to an unusual number of days, bring many thousands of his Majesty's good subjects together, to their emolument and delight, with innocence. And however little share of that merit my unequal pen may pretend to, yet I hope the just admirers of Sir John Vanbrugh will allow I have, at worst, been a careful guardian of his orphan muse, by leading it into your Majesty's royal protection.

The design of this play being chiefly to expose and reform the licentious irregularities that, too often, break

in upon the peace and happiness of the married state; where could so hazardous and unpopular an undertaking be secure, but in the protection of a princess, whose exemplary conjugal virtues have given such illustrious proof of what sublime felicity that holy state is capable?

And though a crown is no certain title to content, yet to the honour of that institution be it said, the royal harmony of hearts that now enchants us from the throne, is a reproach to the frequent disquiet of those many insensible subjects about it, who (from his Majesty's paternal care of his people) have more leisure to be happy: and 'tis our Queen's peculiar glory, that we often see her as eminently raised above her circle, in private happiness, as in dignity.

Yet Heaven, madam, that has placed you on such height, to be the more conspicuous pattern of your sex, had still left your happiness imperfect, had it not given those inestimable treasures of your mind and person to the only Prince on earth that could have deserved them. A crown, received from any but the happy Monarch's hand, who invested you with that which you now adorn, had only seemed the work of fortune; but thus bestowed, the world acknowledges it the due reward of Providence, for one you once so gloriously refused.

But as the fame of such elevated virtue has lifted the plain addresses of a whole nation into eloquence, the best repeated eulogiums on that theme are but intrusions

DEDICATION.

v

on your Majesty's greater pleasure of secretly deserving
them. I therefore beg leave to subscribe myself,

May it please your Majesty,

Your Majesty's most devoted,

most obedient, and

most humble servant,

COLLET CIBBER.

My Lord, I have the honor to receive from your Majesty's command the following lines, which I have the pleasure to send you, and I am sure they will be of great use to you. I have the honor to be, Sir, your Majesty's most obedient and most humble servant.

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TO THE
R E A D E R.

HAVING taken upon me, in the prologue to this play, to give the auditors some short account of that part of it which Sir John Vanbrugh left unfinished, and not thinking it advisable, in that place, to limit their judgment by so high a commendation as I thought it deserved; I have, therefore, for the satisfaction of the curious, printed the whole of what he wrote, separately, under the single title he gave it of, *A Journey to London*, without presuming to alter a line.

Yet, when I own, that in my last conversation with him, (which chiefly turned upon what he had done towards a comedy) he excused his not shewing it me till he had reviewed it, confessing the scenes were yet undigested, too long, and irregular, particularly in the lower characters, I have but one excuse for publishing what he never designed should come into the world as it then was, *viz.* I had no other way of taking those many faults to myself, which may be justly found in my presuming to finish it.

However, a judicious Reader will find in his original papers, that the characters are strongly drawn, new, spirited, and natural; taken from sensible observations on high and lower life, and from a just indignation at the follies in fashion. All I could gather from him of what he intended in the catastrophe, was, that the conduct of his imaginary fine lady had so provoked him, that he designed actually to have made her husband turn her out of his doors. But when his performance came, after his decease, to my hands, I thought such violent measures, how-

ever just they might be in real life, were too severe for comedy, and would want the proper surprisè, which is due to the end of a play. Therefore, with much ado, (and it was as much as I could do with probability.) I preserved the lady's chastity, that the sense of her errors might make a reconciliation not impracticable; and I hope the mitigation of her sentence has been since justified by its success.

My inclination to preserve as much as possible of Sir John, I soon saw had drawn the whole into an unusual length; the Reader will, therefore, find here a scene or two of the lower humour, that were left out after the first day's presentation.

The favour the Town has shewn to the higher characters in this play, is a proof that their taste is not wholly vitiated by the barbarous entertainments that have been so expensively set off to corrupt it: but, while the repetition of the best old plays is so apt to give satiety, and good new ones so scarce a commodity, we must not wonder that the poor actors are sometimes forced to trade in trash for a livelihood.

I cannot yet take leave of the Reader, without endeavouring to do justice to those principal actors who have so evidently contributed to the support of this comedy: and I wish I could separate the praises due to them, from the secret vanity of an author; for all I can say will still insinuate, that they could not have so highly excelled, unless the skill of the writer had given them proper occasion. However, as I had rather appear vain than unthankful, I will venture to say of Mr. Wilkes *, that in the last act, I never saw any passion take so natural a possession of an actor, or any actor take so tender a possession of his auditors—Mr. Mills †, too, is confessed by every body to have surprisèd them, by so far excelling himself—But there is no doing right to Mrs. Oldfield ‡, without putting people in mind of what others, of great merit, have wanted to come near

* In Lord Townly. † Mr. Manly. ‡ Lady Grace.

her——'Tis not enough to say, she here out-did her usual excellence. I might therefore justly leave her to the constant admiration of these spectators who have the pleasure of living while she is an actress. But as this is not the only time she has been the life of what I have given the public, so, perhaps, my saying a little more of so memorable an actress, may give this play a chance to be read, when the people of this age shall be ancestors——May it therefore give emulation to our successors of the stage, to know, that to the ending of the year 1727, a cotemporary comedian relates, that Mrs. Oldfield was then in her highest excellence of action, happy in all the rarely found requisites that meet in one person to complete them for the stage——She was in stature just rising to that height, where the graceful can only begin to shew itself; of a lively aspect, and a command in her mien, that like the principal figure in the finest painting, first seizes, and longest delights the eye of the spectators. Her voice was sweet, strong, piercing, and melodious; her pronunciation voluble, distinct, and musical; and her emphasis always placed where the spirit of the sense, in her periods, only demanded it. If she delighted more in the higher comic than in the tragic strain, 'twas because the last is too often written in a lofty disregard of nature. But in characters of modern practised life, she found occasions to add the particular air and manner which distinguished the different humours she presented; whereas, in tragedy, the manner of speaking varies as little as the blank verse it is written in.——She had one petuilar happiness from nature, she looked and maintained the agreeable, at a time when other fine women only raise admirers by their understanding——The spectator was always as much informed by her eyes as her elocution; for the look is the only proof that an actor rightly conceives what he utters, there being scarce an instance, where the eyes do their part, that the elocution is known to be faulty. The qualities she had acquired, were the genteel and the elegant; the one in her air, and the other in her dress, never had her equal on the stage; and the ornaments she herself provided (particularly in this play) seemed in all respects the *paraphernalia* of a woman of quality. And of that sort were the characters she

chiefly excelled in; but her natural good sense, and lively turn of conversation, made her way so easy to ladies of the highest rank, that it is a less wonder if, on the stage, she sometimes was, what might have become the finest woman in real life to have supported.

Theatre-Royal,

C. CIBBER.

Jan. 27, 1727-8.

The grand object of this play is the correction of the highest in the several errors of fashion and civility—and the chastisement of vulgar folly, and the raising of a nation, and journeying to a certain in an utter unacquaintance with life.

With the persons here presented, all may readily discern unacquaintance—there is the airy levity of rank, and what is able to be found there, its composed respectability—there is the ready and sincere Manners—there is also, to compare with some illustrious families we could name, the polished wearing mind of Lady Grace. There is the sharper pressing upon incapacity—and ignorance, having after place without powers, inflexible to the ridicule of humor on maintained—and the cup of the father running his head into infamy in order to be familiar.

What in life, however, does not invariably happen, here is also complete detection of knavery, and an entire reform to the whole of the disposition.

THE
PROVOK'D HUSBAND

Is the joint performance of Sir JOHN VANBRUGH and COLLEY CIBBER, and perhaps, as a composition, superior to any cotemporary comedy, as well from the nature and variety of its characters, as from what is not so generally attended to, the sufficiency of its *moral*.

The grand object of this play is the correction of the higher folly in the eccentric errors of fashion and cultivation—and the chastisement of vulgar folly aiming after absurd elevation, and journeying to a capital in an utter unacquaintance with life.

With the persons here presented, all may readily claim acquaintance—Here is the airy levity of rank, and what is also to be found there, its composed reflecting dignity—Here is the steady and sincere *Manly*—Here is also, to compare with some illustrious females we could name, the polished unerring mind of *Lady Grace*. Here is the sharper preying upon incapacity—and IGNORANCE, hunting after place without powers, insensible to the ridicule of situation unsustained—and the cub of the father running his head into infamy in order to be familiar.

What in life, however, does not invariably happen, here is also complete detection of knavery, and an entire reform to thoughtless dissipation.

If such, and so strong be the ground-work of this Piece, and a happier it is not easy to imagine, it is but justice to say, that all the heightening to be bestowed by sentiment and expression is here perfect. The language is extremely nervous and terse; the higher scenes have that rebound of sarcasm, or of wit, which prevents satiety in situations above humour. The lower manners here are faithful and diverting—yet, perhaps, the excitement to laughter, if we except one scene, is not remarkably strong in this play.—The mind, naturally reaching up to rank, is most intent upon the conduct of the superior personages of the drama,—and the reformation of the elegant *Lady Townly* is worked up with so masterly a hand, that perhaps few tragedies have greater power in the excitement of the tender emotions.

PROLOGUE.

THIS play took birth from principles of trash,
 To make amends for errors past of youth.
 A bard, that's now no more, in riper days,
 Conscious, review'd the license of his plays:
 And though applause his wanton muse had fir'd,
 Himself condemn'd what sensual minds admir'd.
 At length he own'd, that plays should let you see,
 Not only what you are, but ought to be;
 Though vice was natural, 'twas never meant
 The stage should shew it, but for punishment.
 Warm with that thought, his muse once more took flame,
 Resolv'd to bring licentious life to shame.
 Such was the piece his latest pen design'd,
 But left no traces of his plan behind.
 Luxuriant scenes, unprun'd, or half contriv'd;
 Yet, through the mass, his native fire surviv'd:
 Rough, as rich ore in mines, the treasure lay,
 Yet still 'twas rich, and forms, at length, a play;
 In which the bold compiler boasts no merit,
 But that his pains have sav'd your scenes of spirit.
 Not scenes that would a noisy joy impart,
 But such as hush the mind, and warm the heart.
 From praise of hands no sure account he draws,
 But fix'd attention is sincere applause:
 If then (for hard you'll own the task) his art
 Can to those embryon-scenes new life impart,
 The living proudly would exclude his lays,
 And to the buried bard resigns the praise.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

- Lord TOWNLY, of a regular life, - Mr. Kemble.
 Mr. MANLY, an admirer of Lady Grace, - Mr. Bentley.
 Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, a country }
 gentleman, } - Mr. Parsons.
 Squire RICHARD, his son, a mere whelp, - Mr. Suck.
 Count BASSET, a gamester, - Mr. Dodd.
 JOHN MOODY, servant to Sir Francis, an }
 honest clown, } - Mr. Moody.

Women.

- Lady TOWNLY, immoderate in her pursuit }
 of pleasures, } - Miss Farren.
 Lady GRACE, sister to Lord Townly, of }
 exemplary virtue, } - Mrs. Powell.
 Lady WRONGHEAD, wife to Sir Francis, }
 inclined to be a fine lady, } - Mrs. Hopkins.
 Miss JENNY, her daughter, pert and for- }
 ward, } - Miss Collins.
 Mrs. MOTHERLY, one that lets lodgings, - Mrs. Booth.
 MINTILX, her niece, seduced by the Count, - Miss Barris.
 Mrs. TRUSTY, Lady Townly's woman, - Miss Heard.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

- Lord TOWNLY, of a regular life, - - - - - Mr. Holman.
 Mr. MANLY, an admirer of Lady Grace, - - - - - Mr. Farren.
 Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, a country }
 gentleman, - - - - - } - Mr. Wilton.
 Squire RICHARD, his son, a mere whelp, - - - - - Mr. Blanchard.
 Count BASSET, a gamester, - - - - - Mr. Bernard.
 JOHN MOODY, servant to Sir Francis, an }
 honest clown, - - - - - } - Mr. Quick.

Women.

- Lady TOWNLY, immoderate in her pursuit }
 of pleasures, - - - - - } - Mrs. Esten.
 Lady GRACE, sister to Lord Townly, of }
 exemplary virtue, - - - - - } - Mrs. Mattocks.
 Lady WRONGHEAD, wife to Sir Francis, }
 inclined to be a fine lady, - - - - - } - Mrs. Webb.
 Miss JENNY, her daughter, pert and for- }
 ward, - - - - - } - Mrs. Harlow.
 Mrs. MOTHERLY, one that lets lodgings, - - - - - Mrs. Powell.
 MYRTILLA, her niece, seduced by the Count, - - - - - Mrs. Lewis.
 Mrs. TRUSTY, Lady Townly's woman, - - - - - Miss Stuart.

THE
PROVOK'D HUSBAND.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Lord TOWNLY's Apartment.

Lord Townly, solus.

WHY did I marry?—Was it not evident, my plain, rational scheme of life was impracticable, with a woman of so different a way of thinking?—Is there one article of it that she has not broke in upon?—Yes—let me do her justice—her reputation—That—I have no reason to believe is in question—But then how long her profligate course of pleasures may make her able to keep it—is a shocking question! and her presumption while she keeps it—insupportable! for on the pride of that single virtue she seems to lay it down as a fundamental point, that the free indulgence of every other vice this fertile town affords, is the birth-right prerogative of a woman of quality—Amazing! that a creature so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought towards her happiness—Thus while she admits of no lover, she thinks it a greater merit still, in her chastity, not to care for

her husband; and while she herself is solacing in one continual round of cards and good company, he, poor wretch, is left at large, to take care of his own contentment——'Tis time, indeed, some care were taken, and speedily there shall be——Yet, let me not be rash——Perhaps this disappointment of my heart may make me too impatient; and some tempers, when reproach'd, grow more untractable——Here she comes——Let me be calm a while.

Enter Lady TOWNLY.

Going out so soon after dinner, madam?

Lady T. Lard, my lord! what can I possibly do at home?

Lord T. What does my sister, Lady Grace, do at home?

Lady T. Why, that is to me amazing! Have you ever any pleasure at home?

Lord T. It might be in your power, madam, I confess, to make it a little more comfortable to me.

Lady T. Comfortable! And so, my good lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit stay at home to comfort her husband. Lord, what notions of life some men have!

Lord T. Don't you think, madam, some ladies' notions are full as extravagant?

Lady T. Yes, my lord, when the tame doves live coop'd within the pen of your precepts, I do think 'em prodigious indeed.

Lord T. And when they fly wild about this town, madam, pray, what must the world think of 'em then?

Lady T. Oh, this world is not so ill bred as to quarrel with any woman for liking it!

Lord T. Nor am I, madam, a husband so well bred, as to bear my wife's being so fond of it; in short, the life you lead, madam—

Lady T. Is to me the pleasantest life in the world.

Lord T. I should not dispute your taste, madam, if a woman had a right to please nobody but herself.

Lady T. Why, whom would you have her please?

Lord T. Sometimes her husband.

Lady T. And don't you think a husband under the same obligation?

Lord T. Certainly.

Lady T. Why, then, we are agreed, my lord—For if I never go abroad, till I am weary of being at home—which you know is the case—is it not equally reasonable, not to come home till one is weary of being abroad?

Lord T. If this be your rule of life, madam, 'tis time to ask you one serious question.

Lady T. Don't let it be long a coming then—for I am in haste.

Lord T. Madam, when I am serious, I expect a serious answer.

Lady T. Before I know the question?

Lord T. Psha!—Have I power, madam, to make you serious by entreaty?

Lady T. You have.

Lord T. And you promise to answer me sincerely?

Lady T. Sincerely.

Lord T. Now then recollect your thoughts, and tell me seriously why you married me?

Lady T. You insist upon truth, you say?

Lord T. I think I have a right to it.

Lady T. Why then, my lord, to give you, at once, a proof of my obedience and sincerity—I think—I married—to take off that restraint that lay upon my pleasures while I was a single woman.

Lord T. How, madam! is any woman under less restraint after marriage than before it?

Lady T. Oh, my lord, my lord! they are quite different creatures! Wives have infinite liberties in life, that would be terrible in an unmarried woman to take.

Lord T. Name one.

Lady T. Fifty if you please—To begin, then,—in the morning—A married woman may have men at her toilet; invite them to dinner; appoint them a party in the stage-box at the play; engross the conversation there; call them by their christian names; talk louder than the players; from thence jaunt into the city; take a frolicsome supper at an India-House; perhaps, in her *gaieté de cœur*, toast a pretty-fellow; then clatter again to this end of the town; break, with the morning, into an assembly; crowd to the hazard-table; throw a familiar *levant* upon some sharp, lurching man of quality, and if he demands his money, turn it off with a loud laugh, and cry—you'll owe it him, to vex him, ha, ha!

Lord T. Prodigious!

[*Aside.*

Lady T. These, now, my lord, are some few of the many modish amusements that distinguish the privilege of a wife, from that of a single woman.

Lord T. Death, madam! what law has made these liberties less scandalous in a wife, than in an unmarried woman?

Lady T. Why the strongest law in the world, custom—custom time out of mind, my lord.

Lord T. Custom, madam, is the law of fools; but it shall never govern me.

Lady T. Nay, then, my lord, 'tis time for me to observe the laws of prudence.

Lord T. I wish I could see an instance of it.

Lady T. You shall have one this moment, my lord; for I think, when a man begins to lose his temper at home, if a woman has any prudence, why—she'll go abroad 'till he comes to himself again. [Going.]

Lord T. Hold, madam—I am amaz'd you are not more uneasy at the life you lead. You don't want sense, and yet seem void of all humanity; for, with a blush I say it, I think I have not wanted love.

Lady T. Oh, don't say that, my lord, if you suppose I have my senses.

Lord T. What is it I have done to you? What can you complain of?

Lady T. Oh, nothing in the least! 'Tis true, you have heard me say, I have owed my Lord Lurcher an hundred pounds these three weeks—but what then—a husband is not liable to his wife's debts of honour, you know—and if a silly wo-

man will be uneasy about money she can't be sued for, what's that to him? As long as he loves her, to be sure, she can have nothing to complain of.

Lord T. By Heaven, if my whole fortune thrown into your lap, could make you delight in the cheerful duties of a wife, I should think myself a gainer by the purchase.

Lady T. That is, my lord, I might receive your whole estate, provided you were sure I would not spend a shilling of it.

Lord T. No, madam; were I master of your heart, your pleasures would be mine; but, different as they are, I'll feed even your follies to deserve it—Perhaps you may have some other trifling debts of honour abroad, that keep you out of humour at home—at least it shall not be my fault, if I have not more of your company—There, there's a bill of five hundred—and now, madam—

Lady T. And now, my lord, down to the ground I thank you—Now I am convinced, were I weak enough to love this man, I should never get a single guinea from him. [Aside.

Lord T. If it be no offence, madam—

Lady T. Say what you please, my lord; I am in that harmony of spirits, it is impossible to put me out of humour.

Lord T. How long in reason then, do you think that sum ought to last you?

Lady T. Oh, my dear, dear lord! now you have spoiled all again: how is it possible I should answer for an event that so utterly depends upon fortune? But to shew you that I am more inclined to get mo-

ney than to throw it away—I have a strong prepossession, that with this five hundred, I shall win five thousand.

Lord T. Madam, if you were to win ten thousand, it would be no satisfaction to me.

Lady T. Oh, the churl! ten thousand! what! not so much as wish I might win ten thousand?—Ten thousand! Oh, the charming sum! what infinite pretty things might a woman of spirit do with ten thousand guineas! O' my conscience, if she were a woman of true spirit—she—she might lose them all again.

Lord T. And I had rather it should be so, madam, provided I could be sure that were the last you would lose.

Lady T. Well, my lord, to let you see I design to play all the good house-wife I can, I am now going to a party at *quadrille*, only to piddle with a little of it, at poor two guineas a fish, with the Dutchess of Quiteright. [Exit.

Lord T. Insensible creature! neither reproaches or indulgence, kindness or severity, can wake her to the least reflection! Continual licence has lull'd her into such a lethargy of care, that she speaks of her excesses with the same easy confidence, as if they were so many virtues. What a turn has her head taken!—But how to cure it—I am afraid the physic must be strong that reaches her—Lenitives, I see, are to no purpose—take my friend's opinion—Manly will speak freely—my sister with tenderness to both sides. They know my case—I'll talk with them.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Manly, my lord, has sent to know if your lordship was at home.

Lord T. They did not deny me?

Serv. No, my lord.

Lord T. Very well; step up to my sister, and say, I desire to speak with her.

Serv. Lady Grace is here, my lord. [*Exit Serv.*]

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lord T. So, lady fair; what pretty weapon have you been killing your time with?

Lady G. A huge folio, that has almost killed me—I think I have read half my eyes out.

Lord T. Oh! you should not pore so much just after dinner, child.

Lady G. That's true: but any body's thoughts are better always than one's own, you know.

Lord T. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Leave word at the door, I am at home to nobody, but Mr. Manly. [*Exit Serv.*]

Lady G. And why is he excepted, pray, my lord?

Lord T. I hope, madam, you have no objection to his company?

Lady G. Your particular orders upon my being here, look, indeed, as if you thought I had not.

Lord T. And your ladyship's inquiry into the reason of those orders, shews, at least, it was not a matter indifferent to you.

Lady G. Lord, you make the oddest constructions, brother!

Lord T. Look you, my grave Lady Grace—in one serious word—I wish you had him.

Lady G. I can't help that.

Lord T. Ha! you can't help it; ha, ha! The flat simplicity of that reply was admirable!

Lady G. Pooh, you tease one, brother!

Lord T. Come, I beg pardon, child—this is not a point, I grant you, to trifle upon; therefore, I hope you'll give me leave to be serious.

Lady G. If you desire it, brother: though, upon my word, as to Mr. Manly's having any serious thoughts of me—I know nothing of it.

Lord T. Well—there's nothing wrong in your making a doubt of it—But, in short, I find, by his conversation of late, that he has been looking round the world for a wife; and if you were to look round the world for a husband, he is the first man I would give to you.

Lady G. Then, whenever he makes me any offer, brother, I will certainly tell you of it.

Lord T. Oh! that's the last thing he'll do: he'll never make you an offer, 'till he's pretty sure it won't be refused.

Lady G. Now you make me curious. Pray, did he ever make any offer of that kind to you?

Lord T. Not directly; but that imports nothing; he is a man too well acquainted with the female world to be brought into a high opinion of any one woman, without some well-examined proof of her merit; yet I have reason to believe, that your good

sense, your turn of mind, and your way of life, have brought him to so favourable a one of you, that a few days will reduce him to talk plainly to me; which, as yet, (notwithstanding our friendship) I have neither declined nor encouraged him to.

Lady G. I am mighty glad we are so near in our way of thinking; for, to tell you the truth, he is much upon the same terms with me: you know he has a satirical turn; but never lashes any folly, without giving due encomiums to its opposite virtue: and upon such occasions, he is sometimes particular, in turning his compliments upon me, which I don't receive with any reserve, lest he should imagine I take them to myself.

Lord T. You are right, child: when a man of merit makes his addressee, good sense may give him an answer, without scorn or coquetry.

Lady G. Hush! he's here:—

Enter Mr. MANLY.

Man. My lord, your most obedient.

Lord T. Dear Manly, yours—I was thinking to send to you.

Man. Then, I am glad I am here, my lord—Lady Grace, I kiss your hands—What, only you two! How many visits may a man make, before he falls into such unfashionable company? A brother and sister soberly sitting at home, when the whole town is a gadding! I question if there is so particular a *tête à tête* again, in the whole parish of St. James's.

Lady G. Fie, fie, Mr. Manly! how censorious you are!

Man. I had not made the reflection, madam; but that I saw you an exception to it—Where's my lady?

Lord T. That, I believe, is impossible to guess.

Man. Then I won't try, my lord—

Lord T. But, 'tis probable, I may hear of her, by that time I have been four or five hours in bed.

Man. Now, if that were my case—I believe I—But, I beg pardon, my lord.

Lord T. Indeed, sir, you shall not: you will oblige me if you speak out: for it was upon this head I wanted to see you.

Man. Why then, my lord, since you oblige me to proceed—if that were my case—I believe I should certainly sleep in another house.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Man. Only a compliment, madam.

Lady G. A compliment!

Man. Yes, madam, in rather turning myself out of doors than her!

Lady G. Don't you think that would be going too far?

Man. I don't know but it might, madam; for, in strict justice, I think she ought rather to go than I.

Lady G. This is new doctrine, Mr. Manly.

Man. As old, madam, as love, honour, and obey. When a woman will stop at nothing that's wrong, why should a man balance any thing that's right?

Lady G. Bless me! but this is fomenting things—

Man. Fomentations, madam, are sometimes necessary to dispel tumours: though I do not directly advise my lord to do this—This is only what, upon the same provocation, I would do myself.

Lady G. Ay, ay, you would do! Bachelors wives, indeed, are finely governed.

Man. If the married men's were as well—I am apt to think we should not see so many mutual plagues taking the air in separate coaches.

Lady G. Well, but suppose it your own case; would you part with your wife, because she now and then stays out in the best company?

Lord T. Well said, Lady Grace! Come, stand up for the privilege of your sex. This is like to be a warm debate. I shall edify.

Man. Madam, I think a wife, after midnight, has no occasion to be in better company than her husband's: and that frequent unreasonable hours make the best company—the worst she can fall into.

Lady G. But if people of condition are to keep company with one another, how is it possible to be done, unless one conforms to their hours?

Man. I can't find that any woman's good breeding obliges her to conform to other people's vices.

Lord T. I doubt, child, here we are got a little on the wrong side of the question.

Lady G. Why so, my lord? I can't think the case so bad as Mr. Manly states it—People of quality are not tied down to the rules of those who have their fortunes to make.

Man. No people, madam, are above being tied down to some rules, that have fortunes to lose.

Lady G. Pooh! I'm sure, if you were to take my side of the argument, you would be able to say something more for it.

Lord T. Well, what say you to that, Manly?

Man. Why, troth, my lord, I have something to say.

Lady G. Ay! that I should be glad to hear, now.

Lord T. Out with it.

Man. Then, in one word, this, my lord, I have often thought that the misconduct of my lady has, in a great measure, been owing to your lordship's treatment of her.

Lady G. Bless me!

Lord T. My treatment!

Man. Ay, my lord, you so idolized her before marriage, that you even indulged her like a mistress after it: in short, you continued the lover, when you should have taken up the husband.

Lady G. Oh, frightful! this is worse than t'other; can a husband love a wife too well?

Man. As easy, madam, as a wife may love her husband too little.

Lord T. So; you too are never like to agree, I find.

Lady G. Don't be positive, brother—I am afraid we are both of a mind already. [*Aside.*] And do you, at this rate, ever hope to be married, Mr. Manly?

Man. Never, madam, 'till I can meet with a woman that likes my doctrine.

Lady G. 'Tis pity but your mistress should hear it.

Man. Pity me, madam, when I marry the woman that won't hear it.

Lady G. I think, at least, he can't say that's me. [Aside:

Man. And so, my lord, by giving her more power than was needful, she has none where she wants it; having such entire possession of you, she is not mistress of herself. And, mercy on us! how many fine women's heads have been turned upon the same occasion!

Lord T. Oh, Manly, 'tis too true! there's the source of my disquiet; she knows and has abus'd her power; nay, I am still so weak, (with shame I speak it) 'tis not an hour ago, that in the midst of my impatience—I gave her another bill for five hundred to throw away.

Man. Well, my lord, to let you see I am sometimes upon the side of good-nature, I won't absolutely blame you; for the greater your indulgence, the more you have to reproach her with.

Lady G. Ay, Mr. Manly, here now I begin to come in with you. Who knows, my lord, but you may have a good account of your kindness?

Man. That, I am afraid, we had not best depend upon. But since you have had so much patience, my lord, even go on with it a day or two more; and upon her ladyship's next sally, be a little rounder in your expostulations; if that don't work—drop her some cool hints of a determined reformation, and leave her—to breakfast upon them.

Lord T. You are perfectly right. How valuable is a friend, in our anxiety !

Man. Therefore, to divert that, my lord, I beg, for the present, we may call another cause.

Lady G. Ay, for goodness' sake, let us have done with this.

Lord T. With all my heart.

Lady G. Have you no news abroad, Mr. Manly ?

Man. *Apropos*—I have some, madam ; and I believe, my lord, as extraordinary in its kind——

Lord T. Pray, let us have it.

Man. Do you know that your country neighbour, and my wife kinsman, Sir Francis Wronghead, is coming to town with his whole family ?

Lord T. The fool ! What can be his business here ?

Man. Oh ! of the last importance, I'll assure you——No less than the business of the nation.

Lord T. Explain.

Man. He has carried his election—against Sir John Worthland.

Lord T. The deuce ! What ! for——for——

Man. The famous borough of Guzzledown.

Lord T. A proper representative indeed.

Lady G. Pray, Mr. Manly, don't I know him ?

Man. You have dined with him, madam, when I was last down with my lord, at Bellmont.

Lady G. Was not that he that got a little merry before dinner, and overset the tea-table in making his compliments to my lady ?

Man. The same.

Lady G. Pray what are his circumstances? I know but very little of him.

Man. Then he is worth your knowing, I can tell you, madam. His estate, if clear, I believe, might be a good two thousand pounds a-year; though as it was left him, saddled with two jointures, and two weighty mortgages upon it, there is no saying what it is—But that he might be sure never to mend it, he married a profuse young hussy, for love, without a penny of money. Thus, having, like his brave ancestors, provided heirs for the family (for his dove breeds like a tame pigeon), he now finds children and interest-money making such a bawling about his ears, that at last he has taken the friendly advice of his kinsman, the good Lord Danglecourt, to run his estate two thousand pounds more in debt, to put the whole management of what is left into Paul Pil-lage's hands, that he may be at leisure himself to retrieve his affairs, by being a parliament man.

Lord T. A most admirable scheme, indeed!

Man. And with this politic prospect, he is now upon his journey to London——

Lord T. What can it end in?

Man. Pooh! a journey into the country again.

Lord T. Do you think he'll stir, 'till his money is gone; or, at least, till the session is over?

Man. If my intelligence is right, my lord, he won't sit long enough to give his vote for a turn-pike.

Lord T. How so?

Man. Oh, a bitter business; he had scarce a vote in the whole town, besides the returning offi-

cer. Sir John will certainly have it heard at the bar of the house, and send him about his business again.

Lord T. Then he has made a fine business of it indeed.

Man. Which, as far as my little interest will go, shall be done in as few days as possible.

Lady G. But why would you ruin the poor gentleman's fortune, Mr. Manly?

Man. No, madam; I would only spoil his project, to save his fortune.

Lady G. How are you concerned enough to do either?

Man. Why—I have some obligations to the family, madam: I enjoy, at this time a pretty estate, which Sir Francis was heir at law to: but—by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. [To Man.] Sir, here is one of your servants from your house desires to speak with you.

Man. Will you give him leave to come in, my lord?

Lord T. Sir—the ceremony's of your own making.

Enter MANLY's Servant.

Man. Well, James, what's the matter?

James. Sir, here is John Moody just come to town: he says, Sir Francis, and all the family, will

be here to-night, and is in a great hurry to speak with you.

Man. Where is he?

James. At our house, fir; he has been gaping and stumping about the streets in his dirty boots, and asking every one he meets, if they can tell him where he may have a good lodging for a Parliament-man, till he can hire a handsome house, fit for all his family, for the winter.

Man. I am afraid, my lord, I must wait upon Mr. Moody.

Lord T. Pr'ythee let us have him here; he will divert us.

Man. Oh, my lord, he's such a cub! Not but he's so near common sense, that he passes for a wit in the family.

Lady G. I beg, of all things, we may have him: I am in love with nature, let her dress be never so homely.

Man. Then desire him to come hither, James.

[*Exit James.*]

Lady G. Pray what may be Mr. Moody's post?

Man. Oh! his *maitre d'hotel*, his butler, his bailiff, his hind, his huntsman, and sometimes—his companion.

Lord T. It runs in my head, that the moment this knight has set him down in the house, he will get up, to give them the earliest proof of what importance he is to the public, in his own country.

Man. Yes, and when they have heard him, he will find, that his utmost importance stands valued at—sometimes being invited to dinner.

Lady G. And her ladyship, I suppose, will make as considerable a figure in her sphere, too.

Man. That you may depend upon: for (if I don't mistake) she has ten times more of the jade in her than she yet knows of: and she will so improve in this rich soil in a month, that she will visit all the ladies that will let her into their houses; and run in debt to all the shopkeepers that will let her into their books: in short, before her important spouse has made five pounds by his eloquence at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at dice and quadrille in the parish of St. James's.

Lord T. So that, by that time he is declared unduly elected, a swarm of duns will be ready for their money; and his worship—will be ready for a gaol.

Man. Yes, yes, that I reckon will close the account of this hopeful journey to London—But see, here comes the fore-horse of the team.

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Oh, honest John!

J. Moody. Ad's waunds and heart, Measter Manly! I'm glad I ha' fun ye. Lawd, lawd, give me a buse! Why, that's friendly naw. Flesh! I thought we would never ha' got hither. Well, and how do you do, Measter?—Good lack! I beg pardon for my bawldness—I did not see 'at his honour was here.

Lord T. Mr. Moody, your servant: I am glad to see you in London: I hope all the good family is well.

J. Moody. Thanks be prais'd, your honour, they are all in pretty good heart; tho'f we have had a power of crosses upo' the road.

Lady G. I hope my lady has had no hurt, Mr. Moody?

J. Moody. Noa, and please your ladyship, she was never in better humour: there's money enough stirring now.

Man. What has been the matter, John?

J. Moody. Why, we came up in such a hurry, you mun think that our tackle was not so tight as it should be.

Man. Come tell us all——Pray, how do they travel?

J. Moody. Why, i' the awld coach, Measter; and 'cause my lady loves to do things handsom, to be sure, she would have a couple of cart-horses clapt to the four old geldings, that neighbours might see she went up to London in her coach and six; and so Giles Joulter, the ploughman, rides postillion.

Man. Very well! the journey sets out as it should do. [*Aside.*] What, do they bring all the children with them too?

J. Moody. Noa, noa, only the younk 'squire, and Miss Jenny. The other foive are all out at board, at half-a-crown a head, a week, with John Growse, at Smoke-dunghill farm.

Man. Good again! a right English academy for younger children!

J. Moody. Anon, sir. [*Not understanding him.*]

"*Lady G.* Poor souls! What will become of them?"

J. Moody. Nay, nay, for that matter, madam, "they are in very good hands: Joan loves 'um as 'thof' they were all her own: for she was wet-nurse to every mother's babe of 'um——Ay, ay, they'll ne'er want for a belly-full there!

Lady G. What simplicity!

Man. The Lud 'a mercy upon all good folks! "What work will these people make!

[*Holding up his hands.*"]

Lord T. And when do you expect them here, John?

J. Moody. Why, we were in hopes to ha' come yesterday, an' it had no' been that th' awld Weazle-belly horse tired: and then we were so cruelly loaden, that the two fore-wheels came crash down at once, in Waggon-rut-lane, and there we lost four hours 'fore we could set things to rights again.

Man. So they bring all the baggage with the coach then?

J. Moody. Ay, ay, and good store on it there is—Why, my lady's geer alone were as much as fill'd four portmantel trunks, beside the great deal box that heavy Ralph and the monkey sit upon behind.

Lord T. Lady G. and Man. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady G. Well, Mr. Moody, and pray how many are they within the coach?

J. Moody. Why there's my lady, and his worship; and the younk 'squire, and Miss Jenny, and the fat lapdog, and my lady's maid, Mrs. Handy, and Doll Tripe, the cook, that's all—Only Doll puked a little with riding backward; so they hoisted her into the coach-box, and then her stomach was easy.

Lady G. Oh, I see them! I see them go by me.
Ha, ha!

[*Laughing.*]

J. Moody. Then you mun think, measter, there was some stowage for the belly, as well as the back too; children are apt to be famished upon the road; so we had such cargoes of plum-cake, and baskets of tongues, and biscuits, and cheese, and cold boiled beef—And then, in case of sickness, bottles of cherry brandy, plague water, sack, tent, and strong beer so plenty, as made th' awld coach crack again. Mercy upon them! and send them all well to town, I say.

Man. Ay, and well out on't again, John.

J. Moody. Ods bud, measter! you're a wise man; and for that matter, so am I—Whoam's whoam, I say; I am sure we ha' got but little good e'er fin' we turn'd our backs on't. Nothing but mischief! Some devil's trick or other plagued us aw th' day lung. Crack, goes one thing! bawnce, goes another! Woa! says Roger—Then, fowse! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw! cries miss. Scream! go the maids; and bawl, just as thof' they were stuck. And so, mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night. But my lady was in such a murrain haste to be here, that set out she would, thof' I told her it was Childermas day.

Man. These ladies, these ladies, John—

J. Moody. Ay, measter! I ha' seen a little of them: and I find that the best—when she's mended, won't ha' much goodness to spare.

Lord T. Well said, John. Ha, ha!

Man. I hope, at least, you and your good woman agrees still.

J. Moody. Ay, ay; much of a muchness. Bridget sticks to me: tho' as for her goodness——why, she was willing to come to London too——But hauld a bit! Noa, noa, says I; there may be mischief enough done without you.

Man. Why that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

J. Moody. Ah, weast heart! were measter but hawf the mon that I am——Ods wookers! thof' he'll speak stautly too, sometimes——But then he canno' hawld it——no, he canno' hawld it.

Lord T. Lady G. and Man. Ha, ha, ha!

J. Moody. Ods flesh! but I mun hie me whoam! the coach will be coming every hour naw——but measter charged me to find your worship out; for he has hugey businefs with you: and will certainly wait upon you by that time he can put on a clean neck-cloth.

Man. Oh, John! I'll wait upon him.

J. Moody. Why you wonno' be so kind, will ye?

Man. If you'll tell me where you lodge.

J. Moody. Just i' the freet next to where your worship dwells, at the sign of the golden ball——It's gold all over; where they sell ribbons and flappits, and other sort of geer for gentlewomen.

Man. A milliner's?

J. Moody. Ay, ay, one Mrs. Motherly. Waunds, she has a couple of clever girls there, stitching i' th' fore-room.

Man. Yes, yes, she's a woman of good businefs, no doubt on't——Who recommended that house to you, John?

J. Moody. The greatest good fortune in the world, sure; for as I was gaping about the streets, who should look out of the window there, but the fine gentleman that was always riding by our coach side at York races——Count——Basset; ay, that's he.

Man. Basset! Oh, I remember! I know him by sight.

J. Moody. Well, to be sure, as civil a gentleman to see to——

Man. As any sharper in town. [*Aside.*

J. Moody. At York, he used to breakfast with my lady every morning.

Man. Yes, yes, and I suppose her ladyship will return his compliment here in town. [*Aside.*

J. Moody. Well, measter——

Lord T. My service to Sir Francis, and my lady, John.

Lady G. And mine, pray, Mr. Moody.

J. Moody. Ay, your honours; they'll be proud on't, I dare say.

Man. I'll bring my compliments myself; so, honest John——

J. Moody. Dear Measter Manly! the goodness of goodness bless and preserve you. [*Exit J. Moody.*

Lord T. What a natural creature 'tis!

Lady G. Well, I can't but think John, in a wet afternoon in the country, must be very good company.

Lord T. Oh, the tramontane! If this were known at half the quadrille-tables in town, they would lay down their cards to laugh at you.

Lady G. And the minute they took them up again, they would do the same at the losers—But to let you see, that I think good company may sometimes want cards to keep them together; what think you, if we three sat soberly down to kill an hour at ombre?

Man. I shall be too hard for you, madam.

Lady G. No matter; I shall have as much advantage of my lord, as you have of me.

Lord T. Say you so, madam; have at you then. Here! get the ombre table and cards.

[*Exit Lord Townly.*]

Lady G. Come, Mr. Manly—I know you don't forgive me now.

Man. I don't know whether I ought to forgive your thinking so, madam. Where do you imagine I could pass my time so agreeably?

Lady G. I'm sorry my lord is not here, to take his share of the compliment—But he'll wonder what's become of us.

Man. I'll follow in a moment, madam—

[*Exit Lady Grace.*]

It must be so—She sees I love her—yet with what unoffending decency she avoids an explanation? How amiable is every hour of her conduct! What a vile opinion have I had of the whole sex for these ten years past, which this sensible creature has recovered in less than one! Such a companion, sure, might compensate all the irksome disappointments that pride, folly, and falsehood, ever gave me!

Could woman regulate, like her, their lives,

What halcyon days were in the gift of wives!

Vain rovers, then, might envy what they hate;

And only fools would mock the married state. [Exit.]

ACT II. SCENE I.

*Mrs. MOTHERLY's House. Enter Count BASSET
and Mrs. MOTHERLY.*

Count Bassett.

I TELL you there is not such a family in England for you. Do you think I would have gone out of your lodgings for any body that was not sure to make you easy for the winter?

Moth. Nay, I see nothing against it, sir, but the gentleman's being a parliament-man; and when people may, as it were, think one impertinent, or be out of humour, you know, when a body comes to ask for one's own——

Count Bas. Psha! Pr'ythee never trouble thy head; his pay is as good as the bank—Why, he has above two thousand a-year.

Moth. Alas-a-day, that's nothing! your people of ten thousand a-year have ten thousand things to do with it.

Count Bas. Nay, if you are afraid of being out of your money, what do you think of going a little with me, Mrs. Motherly?

Moth. As how?

Count Bas. Why, I have a game in my hand, in which, if you'll croup me, that is, help me to play it, you shall go five hundred to nothing.

Moth. Say you so?—Why then I go, sir——and now, pray let's see your game.

Count Bas. Look you, in one word, my cards lie thus——When I was down this summer at York, I happened to lodge in the same house with this knight's lady, that's now coming to lodge with you.

Moth. Did you so, sir?

Count Bas. And sometimes had the honour to breakfast, and pass an idle hour with her.——

Moth. Very good; and here, I suppose, you would have the impudence to sup and be busy with her.

Count Bas. Psha! pr'ythee hear me.

Moth. Is this your game? I would not give sixpence for it. What! you have a passion for her pin-money——No, no, country ladies are not so flush of it!

Count Bas. Nay, if you won't have patience——

Moth. One had need to have a good deal, I am sure, to hear you talk at this rate. Is this your way of making my poor niece, Myrtila, easy?

Count Bas. Death! I shall do it still, if the woman will but let me speak——

Moth. Had you not a letter from her this morning?

Count Bas. I have it here in my pocket——this is it. [Shows it and puts it up again.]

Moth. Ay, but I don't find you have made any answer to it.

Count Bas. How the devil can I, if you won't hear me?

Moth. What, hear you talk of another woman!

Count Bas. Oh, lud! Oh, lud! I tell you, I'll make her fortune——Ounds, I'll marry her!

Moth. A likely matter! if you would not do it

when she was a maid, your stomach is not so sharp set now, I presume.

Count Bas. Hey-day ! why your head begins to turn, my dear ! The devil ! you did not think I proposed to marry her myself ?

Moth. If you don't, who the devil do you think will marry her ?

Count Bas. Why, a fool——

Moth. Humph ! there may be sense in that——

Count Bas. Very good—One for t'other, then ; if I can help her to a husband, why should you not come into my scheme of helping me to a wife ?

Moth. Your pardon, sir ; ay, ay, in an honourable affair, you know you may command me——But pray, where is this blessed wife and husband to be had ?

Count Bas. Now, have a little patience—You must know then, this country knight and his lady bring up in the coach with them their eldest son and a daughter, to teach them—to wash their faces, and turn their toes out.

Moth. Good——

Count Bas. The son is an unlick'd whelp, about sixteen, just taken from school ; and begins to hanker after every wench in the family : the daughter, much of the same age ; a pert, forward hussy, who, having eight thousand pounds left her by an old doting grandmother, seems to have a devilish mind to be doing in her way too.

Moth. And your design is to put her into business for life ?

Count Bas. Look you, in short, Mrs. Motherly, we gentlemen, whose occasional chariots roll only upon the four aces, are liable, sometimes, you know, to have a wheel out of order; which, I confess, is so much my case at present, that my dapple greys are reduced to a pair of ambling chairmen. Now, if, with your assistance, I can whip up this young jade into a hackney-coach, I may chance in a day or two after, to carry her, in my own chariot, *en famille*, to an opera. Now, what do you say to me?

Moth. Why, I shall not sleep for thinking of it. But how will you prevent the family smocking your design?

Count Bas. By renewing my addresses to the mother.

Moth. And how will the daughter like that, think you?

Count Bas. Very well—whilst it covers her own affair.

Moth. That's true—it must do—but, as you say, one for t'other, fir; I stick to that—if you don't do my niece's business with the son, I'll blow you with the daughter, depend upon't.

Count Bas. It's a bet—pay as we go, I tell you; and the five hundred shall be staked in a third hand.

Moth. That's honest—But here comes my niece; shall we let her into the secret?

Count Bas. Time enough; may be I may touch upon it.

Enter MYRTILLA.

Moth. So, niece, are all the rooms done out, and the beds sheeted?

Myr. Yes, madam; but Mr. Moody tells us, the lady always burns wax in her own chamber, and we have none in the house.

Moth. Odsso! then I must beg your pardon, Count, this is a busy time, you know.

[Exit Mrs. Motherly.]

Count Bas. Myrtilla, how dost thou do, child?

Myr. As well as a losing gamester can.

Count Bas. Why, what have you lost?

Myr. What I shall never recover; and, what's worse, you that have won it, don't seem to be much the better for it.

Count Bas. Why, child, dost thou ever see any body overjoyed for winning a deep stake six months after 'tis over?

Myr. Would I had never played for it!

Count Bas. Psha! hang these melancholy thoughts! we may be friends still.

Myr. Dull ones.

Count Bas. Useful ones, perhaps——suppose I should help thee to a good husband?

Myr. I suppose you'll think any one good enough, that will take me off o' your hands.

Count Bas. What do you think of the young country 'squire, the heir of the family that's coming to lodge here?

Myr. How should I know what to think of him?

Count Bas. Nay, I only give you the hint, child; it may be worth your while, at least to look about you—Hark, what bustle's that without?

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY in haste.

Moth. Sir, fir! the gentleman's coach is at the door; they are all come.

Count Bas. What, already?

Moth. They are just getting out!—Won't you step and lead in my lady? Do you be in the way, niece; I must run and receive them.

[Exit Mrs. Motherly.]

Count Bas. And think of what I told you.

[Exit Count.]

Myr. Ay, ay; you have left me enough to think of as long as I live—A faithless fellow! I am sure I have been true to him; and for that only reason he wants to be rid of me. But while women are weak, men will be rogues; “and, for a bane
“to both their joys and ours, when our vanity indulges them in such innocent favours as make
“them adore us, we can never be well, till we grant
“them the very one that puts an end to their devotion—But here comes my aunt and the company.”

Mrs. MOTHERLY returns, shewing in Lady WRONG-HEAD, led by Count BASSET.

Moth. If your ladyship pleases to walk into this parlour, madam, only for the present, 'till your servants have got all your things in.

Lady Wrong. Well, dear fir, this is so infinitely obliging—I protest it gives me pain, tho', to turn you out of your lodging thus.

Count Bas. No trouble in the least, madam; we single fellows are soon moved; besides, Mrs. Motherly's my old acquaintance, and I could not be her hinderance.

Moth. The Count is so well bred, madam, I dare say he would do a great deal more to accommodate your ladyship.

Lady Wrong. Oh, dear madam!—A good, well-bred sort of a woman. [*Apart to the Count.*]

Count Bas. Oh, madam! she is very much among people of quality; she is seldom without them in her house.

Lady Wrong. Are there a good many people of quality in this street, Mrs. Motherly?

Moth. Now your ladyship is here, madam, I don't believe there is a house without them.

Lady Wrong. I am mighty glad of that; for, really, I think people of quality should always live among one another.

Count Bas. 'Tis what one would choose, indeed, madam.

Lady Wrong. Bless me! but where are the children all this while?

Moth. Sir Francis, madam, I believe, is taking care of them.

Sir Fran. [*Within.*] John Moody! stay you by the coach, and see all our things out—Come, children.

Moth. Here they are, madam.

Enter Sir FRANCIS, 'Squire RICHARD, and Miss JENNY.

Sir Fran. Well, Count, I mun say it, this was koynd, indeed.

Count Bas. Sir Francis, give me leave to bid you welcome to London.

Sir Fran. Psha! how dost do, mon?—Waunds, I'm glad to see thee! A good fort of a house this.

Count Bas. Is not that Master Richard?

Sir Fran. Ey, ey, that's young Hopeful—Why dost not baw, Dick?

'Squ. Rich. So I do, feyther.

Count Bas. Sir, I'm glad to see you—I protest Mrs. Jane is grown so, I should not have known her.

Sir Fran. Come forward, Jenny.

Jenny. Sure, papa! do you think I don't know how to behave myself?

Count Bas. If I have permission to approach her, Sir Francis.

Jenny. Lord, sir! I'm in such a frightful pickle—
[Salute.]

Count Bas. Every drefs that's proper must become you, madam—you have been a long journey.

Jenny. I hope you will see me in a better to-morrow, sir.

[*Lady Wronghead whispers Mrs. Motherly, pointing to Myrtilla.*]

Moth. Only a niece of mine, madam, that lives with me: she will be proud to give your ladyship any assistance in her power.

Lady Wrong. A pretty sort of a young woman
— Jenny, you two must be acquainted.

Jenny. Oh, mamma, I am never strange in a
strange place. [Salutes Myrtilla.

Myr. You do me a great deal of honour, madam
— Madam, your ladyship's welcome to London.

Jenny. Mamma, I like her prodigiously; she
called me my ladyship.

'Squ. Rich. Pray, mother, mayn't I be acquainted
with her too?

Lady Wrong. You, you clown; stay 'till you learn
a little more breeding first.

Sir Fran. Od's heart, my Lady Wronghead! why
do you baulk the lad? how should he ever learn
breeding, if he does not put himself forward!

'Squ. Rich. Why, ay, feyther, does mother think
'at I'd be uncivil to her?

Myr. Master has so much good humour, madam,
he would soon gain upon any body.

[He kisses Myrtilla.

'Squ. Rich. Lo' you there, mother: an' you would
but be quiet, she and I should do well enough.

Lady Wrong. Why, how now, firrah! boys must
not be so familiar.

'Squ. Rich. Why, an' I know nobody, how the
murrain mun I pass my time here, in a strange
place? Naw you and I, and sifter, forsooth, some-
times, in an afternoon, may play at one and thirty
bone-ace, purely.

Jenny. Speak for yourself, fir; d'ye think I play
at such clownish games?

'*Squ. Rich.* Why and you woant yo' ma' let it aloane; then she and I, mayhap, will have a bawt at all-fours, without you.

Sir Fran. Noa, noa, Dick, that won't do neither; you mun learn to make one at ombre, here, child.

Myr. If master pleases, I'll shew it him.

'*Squ. Rich.* What! the Humber! Hoy day! why does our river run to this tawn, feyther?

Sir Fran. Pooh! you silly tony! ombre is a geam at cards, that the better sort of people play three together at.

'*Squ. Rich.* Nay the moare the merrier, I say; but sifter is always so cros-grain'd—

Jenny. Lord! this boy is enough to deaf people—and one has really been stuff'd up in a coach so long, that—Pray, madam—could not I get a little powder for my hair?

Myr. If you please to come along with me, madam. *[Exeunt Myr. and Jenny.]*

'*Squ. Rich.* What, has sifter taken her away naw! mefs, I'll go and have a little game with 'em. *[Exit after them.]*

Lady Wrong. Well, Count, I hope you won't so far change your lodgings, but you will come, and be at home here sometimes?

Sir Fran. Ay! ay! pr'ythee come and take a bit of mutton with us, naw and tan, when thouh't naught to do.

Count Bas. Well, sir Francis, you shall find I'll make but very little ceremony.

Sir Fran. Why, ay now, that's hearty!

Moth. Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea, after your fatigue? I think I have pretty good.

Lady Wrong. If you please, Mrs. Motherly; but I believe we had best have it above stairs.

Moth. Very well, madam: it shall be ready immediately. *[Exit Mrs. Motherly.]*

Lady Wrong. Won't you walk up, sir?

Sir Fran. Moody!

Count Bas. Shan't we stay for Sir Francis, madam?

Lady Wrong. Lard! don't mind him: he will come if he likes it.

Sir Fran. Ay! ay! ne'er heed me—I have things to look after.

[Exeunt Lady Wrong. and Count Bas.]

Enter JOHN MOODY.

J. Moody. Did your worship want muh?

Sir Fran. Aye, is the coach cleared, and all our things in?

J. Moody. Aw but a few band-boxes, and the neek that's left o' the goose poy—But, a plague on him, th' monkey has gin us the slip, I think—I suppose he's goon to see his relations; for here looks to be a power of um in this tawn—but heavy Ralph is skawered after him.

Sir Fran. Why, let him go to the devil! no matter, and the hawnds had had him a month agoe.—But I with the coach and horses were got safe to the inn! This is a sharp tawn, we mun look about us here, John; therefore I would have you

go along with Roger, and see that nobody runs away with them before they get to the stable.

J. Moody. Alas a-day, fir, I believe our awld cattle won't yeassly be run away with to-night—but homsomdever, we'll ta' the best care we can of um, poor sawls.

Sir Fran. Well, well! make haste——

[*Moody goes out, and returns.*]

J. Moody. Ods flesh! here's Master Monly come to wait upo' your Worship!

Sir Fran. Wheere is he?

J. Moody. Just coming in at threshold.

Sir Fran. Then goa about your business.

[*Exit Moody.*]

Enter MANLY.

Cousin Manly! Sir, I am your very humble servant.

Man. I heard you were come, Sir Francis—and—

Sir Fran. Odsheart! this was kindly done of you naw.

Man. I wish you may think it so, cousin! for I confes, I should have been better pleased to have seen you in any other place.

Sir Fran. How soa, fir?

Man. Nay, 'tis for your own sake; I'm not concerned.

Sir Fran. Look you, cousin; tho' I know you wish me well; yet I don't question I shall give you such weighty reasons for what I have done, that you will say, fir, this is the wisest journey that ever I made in my life.

Man. I think it ought to be, cousin; for I believe you will find it the most expensive one—your election did not cost you a trifle, I suppose.

Sir Fran. Why, ay! it's true! That—that did lick a little; but if a man's wife (and I han't fawn'd yet that I'm a fool) there are ways, cousin, to lick one's self whole again.

Man. Nay, if you have that secret—

Sir Fran. Don't you be fearful, cousin—you'll find that I know something.

Man. If it be any thing for your good, I should be glad to know it too.

Sir Fran. In short, then, I have a friend in a corner, that has let me a little into what's what, at Westminster—that's one thing.

Man. Very well! but what good is that to do you?

Sir Fran. Why not me, as much it does other folks?

Man. Other people, I doubt, have the advantage of different qualifications.

Sir Fran. Why, aye! there it is now! you'll say that I have lived all my days i' the country—what then—I'm o' the quorum—I have been at sessions, and I have made speeches there! aye, and at vestry too—and mayhap they may find here, —that I have brought my tongue up to town with me! D'ye take me naw?

Man. If I take your case right, cousin, I am afraid the first occasion you will have for your eloquence here, will be, to shew that you have any right to make use of it at all.

Sir Fran. How d'ye mean?

Man. That Sir John Worthland has lodged a petition against you.

Sir Fran. Petition! why aye! there let it lie—we'll find a way to deal with that, I warrant you!—Why, you forget, cousin, Sir John's o' the wrung side, mon!

Man. I doubt, Sir Francis, that will do you but little service; for in cases very notorious, which I take yours to be, there is such a thing as a short day, and dispatching them immediately.

Sir Fran. With all my heart! the sooner I send him home again, the better.

Man. And this is the scheme you have laid down, to repair your fortune?

Sir Fran. In one word, cousin, I think it my duty! The Wrongheads have been a considerable family ever since England was England: and since the world knows I have talents wherewithal, they sha'n't say it's my fault, if I don't make as good a figure as any that ever were at the head on't.

Man. Nay, this project, as you have laid it, will come up to any thing your ancestors have done these five hundred years.

Sir Fran. And let me alone to work it: mayhap I hav'n't told you all, neither——

Man. You astonish me! what! and is it full as practicable as what you have told me?

Sir Fran. Ay, thof' I say it——every whit, cousin. You'll find that I have more irons i' the fire than one. I doan't come of a fool's errand!

Man. Very well.

Sir Fran. In a word, my wife has got a friend at court, as well as myself, and her dowghter Jenny is naw pretty well grown up——

Man. [*Afide.*]——And what, in the devil's name, would he do with the dowdy?

Sir Fran. Naw, if I doan't lay in for a husband for her, mayhap, i' this tawn, she may be looking out for herself——

Man. Not unlikely.

Sir Fran. Therefore I have some thoughts of getting her to be maid of honour.

Man. [*Afide.*]——Oh! he has taken my breath away; but I must hear him out——Pray, Sir Francis, do you think her education has yet qualified her for a court?

Sir Fran. Why the girl is a little too mettlesome, it's true; but she has tongue enough: she woan't be dash't! Then she shall learn to daunce forthwith, and that will soon teach her how to stond still you know.

Man. Very well; but when she is thus accomplish'd, you must still wait for a vacancy.

Sir Fran. Why, I hope one has a good chance for that every day, cousin; for if I take it right, that's a post, that folks are not more willing to get into, than they are to get out of——It's like an orange-tree upon that accawnt——it will bear blossoms, and fruit that's ready to drop, at the same time.

Man. Well, sir, you best know how to make good your pretensions! But, pray, where is my lady, and my young cousin? I should be glad to see them too.

Sir Fran. She is but just taking a dish of tea with the Count, and my landlady—I'll call her down.

Man. No, no, if she's engaged, I shall call again.

Sir Fran. Odsheart! but you mun see her naw, cousin; what! the best friend I have in the world!—Here, sweetheart! [*To a servant without.*] pr'y-thee, desire my lady and the gentleman to come dawn a bit; tell her here's cousin Manly come to wait upon her.

Man. Pray, sir, who may the gentleman be?

Sir Fran. You mun know him to be sure; why 'tis Count Basset.

Man. Oh! is it he!—Your family will be infinitely happy in his acquaintance.

Sir Fran. Troth! I think so too: he's the civilest man that ever I knew in my life——Why! here he would go out of his own lodgings, at an hour's warning, purely to oblige my family. Wasn't that kind, naw?

Man. Extremely civil—the family is in admirable hands already. [*Aside.*]

Sir Fran. Then my lady likes him hugely—all the time of York races, she would never be without him.

Man. That was happy, indeed! and a prudent man, you know, should always take care that his wife may have innocent company.

Sir Fran. Why, aye! that's it! and I think there could not be such another!

Man. Why, truly for her purpose, I think not.

Sir Fran. Only naw and tan, he—he stonds a leetle too much upon ceremony; that's his fault.

Man. Oh, never fear! he'll mend that every day—Mercy on us! what a head he has! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. So, here they come.

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD, Count BASSET, and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Lady Wrong. Cousin Manly, this is infinitely obliging; I am extremely glad to see you.

Man. Your most obedient servant, madam; I am glad to see your ladyship look so well, after your journey.

Lady Wrong. Why really, coming to London is apt to put a little more life in one's looks.

Man. Yet the way of living, here, is very apt to deaden the complexion—and, give me leave to tell you, as a friend, madam, you are come to the worst place in the world, for a good woman to grow better in.

Lady Wrong. Lord, cousin! how should people ever make any figure in life, that are always moaped up in the country.

Count Bas. Your ladyship certainly takes the thing in quite a right light, madam. Mr. Manly, your humble servant—a hem.

Man. Familiar puppy. [*Aside.*] Sir, your most obedient—I must be civil to the rascal, to cover my suspicion of him. [*Aside.*

Count Bas. Was you at White's this morning, sir?

Man. Yes, sir, I just called in.

Count Bas. Pray——what——was there any thing done there?

Man. Much as usual, fir; the same daily carcases, and the same crows about them.

Count Bas. The Demoivre-Baronet had a bloody tumble yesterday.

Man. I hope, fir, you had your share of him.

Count Bas. No, faith; I came in when it was all over——I think I just made a couple of bets with him, took up a cool hundred, and so went to the King's Arms.

Lady Wrong. What a genteel easy manner he has.
[*Aside.*]

Man. A very hopeful acquaintance I have made here.
[*Aside.*]

Enter 'Squire RICHARD, with a wet brown paper on his face.

Sir Fran. How naw, Dick; what's the matter with thy forehead, lad?

'Squ. Rich. I ha' gotten a knock upon't.

Lady Wrong. And how did you come by it, you heedless creature?

'Squ. Rich. Why, I was but running after sister, and t' other young woman, into a little room just naw: and so with that they slapp'd the door full in my face, and gave me such a whurr here—I thought they had beaten my brains out; so I got a dab of whet brown paper here, to swage it a while.

Lady Wrong. They served you right enough; will you never have done with your horse-play?

Sir Fran. Pooh, never heed it, lad; it will be well by to-morrow——the boy has a strong head.

Man. Yes truly, his scull seems to be of a comfortable thickness. *[Aside.*

Sir Fran. Come, Dick, here's cousin Manly——fir, this is your god-son.

Squ. Rich. Honour'd godfeyther, I crave leave to ask your blessing.

Man. Thou hast it, child——and if it will do thee any good, may it be to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father.

Enter Miss JENNY.

Lady Wrong. Oh, here's my daughter too. Miss Jenny! don't you see your cousin, child?

Man. And as for thee, my pretty dear——*[Salutes her.]* may'st thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother.

Jenny. I wish I may ever be so handsome, fir.

Man. Hah, Miss Pert! Now that's a thought that seems to have been hatcht in the girl on this side Highgate. *[Aside.*

Sir Fran. Her tongue is a little nimble, fir.

Lady Wrong. That's only from her country education, Sir Francis. You know she has been kept too long there——so I brought her to London, fir, to learn a little more reserve and modesty.

Man. Oh, the best place in the world for it——every woman she meets will teach her something of it——There's the good gentlewoman of the house looks like a knowing person; even she perhaps

will be so good as to shew her a little London behaviour.

Moth. Alas, sir, Miss won't stand long in need of my instruction.

Man. That I dare say. What thou can'st teach her she will soon be mistress of. [*Aside.*]

Moth. If she does, sir, they shall always be at her service.

Lady Wrong. Very obliging indeed, Mrs. Motherly.

Sir Fran. Very kind and civil truly—I think we are got into a mighty good house here.

Man. Oh, yes, and very friendly company.

Count Basf. Humph! I'gad I don't like his looks—he seems a little smoky—I believe I had as good brush off—If I stay, I don't know but he may ask me some odd questions.

Man. Well, sir, I believe you and I do but hinder the family—

Count Basf. It's very true, sir—I was just thinking of going—He don't care to leave me, I see: but it's no matter, we have time enough. [*Aside.*] And so ladies, without ceremony, your humble servant.

[*Exit Count Basset, and drops a letter.*]

Lady Wrong. Ha! what paper's this? Some billet-doux, I'll lay my life, but this is no place to examine it. [*Puts it in her pocket.*]

Sir Fran. Why in such haste, cousin?

Man. Oh, my lady must have a great many affairs upon her hands, after such a journey.

Lady Wrong. I believe, sir, I shall not have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Man. Why, truly, ladies seldom want employment here, madam.

Jenny. And mamma did not come to it to be idle, sir.

Man. Nor you neither, I dare say, my young mistress.

Jenny. I hope not, sir.

Man. Ha, Miss Mettle!—Where are you going, sir?

Sir Fran. Only to see you to the door, sir.

Man. Oh, Sir Francis, I love to come and go without ceremony.

Sir Fran. Nay, sir, I must do as you will have me—your humble servant. [Exit Manly.]

Jenny. This cousin Manly, papa, seems to be but of an odd sort of a crusty humour—I don't like him half so well as the count.

Sir Fran. Pooh! that's another thing, child—Cousin is a little proud indeed; but however you must always be civil to him, for he has a deal of money; and nobody knows who he may give it to.

Lady Wrong. Psha! a fig for his money; you have so many projects of late about money, since you are a parliament man. What, we must make ourselves slaves to his impertinent humours, eight or ten years perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs, and then he will be just old enough to marry his maid.

Moth. Nay, for that matter, madam, the town says he is going to be married already.

Sir Fran. Who! cousin Manly?

Lady Wrong. To whom, pray?

Moth. Why, is it possible your ladyship should know nothing of it!——to my Lord Townly's sister, Lady Grace.

Lady Wrong. Lady Grace!

Moth. Dear madam, it has been in the newspapers!

Lady Wrong. I don't like that, neither.

Sir Fran. Naw, I do; for then it's likely it mayn't be true.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*] If it is not too far gone; at least it may be worth one's while to throw a rub in, his way.

'Squ. Rich. Pray, feyther, haw lung will it be to supper?

Sir Fran. Odsfo! that's true; step to the cook, lad, and ask what she can get us.

"Moth. If you please, sir, I'll order one of my maids to shew her where she may have any thing you have a mind to.

"Sir Fran. Thank you kindly, Mrs. Motherly.

"'Squ. Rich. Ods-flesh! what is not it i' the hawse yet—I shall be famish'd—but hawld! I'll go and ask Doll, an ther's none o' the goose poy left.

"Sir Fran. Do so, and do'ft hear, Dick—see if there's e'er a bottle o' the strong beer that came i' th' coach with us—if there be, clap a toast in it, and bring it up.

"'Squ. Rich. With a little nutmeg and sugar, shawn'a I, feyther.

"Sir Fran. Ay, ay, as thee and I always drink it for breakfast—Go thy ways!—and I'll fill a pipe i' th' mean while.

[Takes one from a pocket-case, and fills it. Exit

'Squire Richard.

"*Lady Wrong.* This boy is always thinking of his belly.

"*Sir Fran.* Why, my dear, you may allow him to be a little hungry after his journey.

"*Lady Wrong.* Nay, e'en breed him your own way—He has been cramming in or out of the coach all this day, I am sure—I wish my poor girl could eat a quarter as much.

"*Jenny.* Oh, as for that I could eat a great deal more, mamma; but then, mayhap, I should grow coarse, like him, and spoil my shape.

"*Lady Wrong.* Ay, so thou wouldst, my dear.

"*Enter 'Squire RICHARD, with a full tankard.*

"*'Squ. Rich.* Here, feyther, I ha' browght it—it's well I went as I did: for our Doll had just baked a toast, and was going to drink it herself.

"*Sir Fran.* Why then, here's to thee, Dick! [Drinks.

"*'Squ. Rich.* Thank you, feyther.

"*Lady Wrong.* Lord, Sir Francis, I wonder you can encourage the boy to swill so much of that lubberly liquor—it's enough to make him quite stupid.

"*'Squ. Rich.* Why it never hurts me, mother; and I sleep like a hawnd after it. [Drinks.

"*Sir Fran.* I am sure I ha' drunk it these thirty years, and by your leave, madam, I don't know that I want wit: ha! ha!

" *Jenny*. But you might have had a great deal more, papa, if you would have been governed by my mother.

" *Sir Fran.* Daughter, he that is governed by his wife has no wit at all.

" *Jenny*. Then I hope I shall marry a fool, sir; for I love to govern dearly.

" *Sir Fran.* You are too pert, child; it don't do well in a young woman.

" *Lady Wrong.* Pray, Sir Francis, don't snub her; she has a fine growing spirit, and if you check her so, you will make her as dull as her brother there.

" *'Squ. Rich.* [After a long draught.] Indeed, mother, I think my sister is too forward.

" *Jenny*. You! you think I'm too forward! sure, brother mud! your head's too heavy to think of any thing but your belly.

" *Lady Wrong.* Well said, miss, he's none of your master, though he is your elder brother.

" *'Squ. Rich.* No, nor she shawnt be my mistress, while she's younger sister.

" *Sir Fran.* Well said, Dick! shew 'em that stawt liquor makes a stawt heart, lad!

" *'Squ. Rich.* So I will! and I'll drink ageen, for all her. [Drinks.]

Enter John Moody.

Sir Fran. So John, how are the horses?

J. Moody. Troth, sir, I ha' nea good opinion o' this tawn, it's made up o' mischief, I think.

Sir Fran. What's the matter naw?

J. Moody. Why, I'll tell your worship—before we were gotten to th' street end, with the coach, here, a great loggerheaded cart, with wheels as thick as a brick wall, laid hawld on't, and has poo'd it aw to bits; crack, went the perch! down goes the coach! and whang says the glasses, all to shievers! Marcy upon us! and this be London! would we were aw weel in the country ageen!

Jenny. What have you to do, to wish us all in the country again, Mr. Lubber? I hope we shall not go into the country again these seven years, mamma; let twenty coaches be pulled to pieces.

Sir Fran. Hold your tongue, Jenny!—Was Roger in no fault in all this?

J. Moody. Noa, fir, nor I, noather. Are not yow asham'd, says Roger, to the carter, to do such an unkind thing by strangers? Noa, says he, you bumkin. Sir, he did the thing on very purpose! and so the folks said that stood by—Very well, says Roger, yow shall see what our meyster will say to ye! Your meyster, says he; your meyster may kiss my—and so he clapped his hand just there, and like your worship. Flesh! I thought they had better breeding in this town.

Sir Fran. I'll teach this rascal some, I'll warrant him! Odsbud! if I take him in hand, I'll play the devil with him.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, do feyther; have him before the parliament.

Sir Fran. Odsbud! and so I will—I will make him know who I am! Where does he live?

J. Moody. I believe in London, fir.

Sir Fran. What's the rascal's name?

J. Moody. I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

'Squ. Rich. What, my name!

Sir Fran. Where did he go?

J. Moody. Sir, he went home.

Sir Fran. Where's that?

J. Moody. By my troth, fir, I doan't know! I heard him say he would cross the same street again to-morrow; and if we had a mind to stand in his way, he would pooll us over and over again.

Sir Fran. Will he so? Odzooks! get me a constable.

Lady Wrong. Pooh! get you a good supper. Come, Sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat for what can't be help'd. Accidents will happen to people that travel abroad to see the world—For my part, I think it's a mercy it was not overturned before we were all out on't.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, that's true again, my dear.

Lady Wrong. Therefore see to-morrow if we can buy one at second-hand, for present use; so bespeak a new one, and then all's easy.

J. Moody. Why, troth, fir, I doan't think this could have held you above a day longer.

Sir Fran. D'ye think so, John?

J. Moody. Why you ha' had it ever since your worship were high sheriff.

Sir Fran. Why then go and see what Doll has got us for supper—and come and get off my boots.

[Exit Sir Fran.]

Lady Wrong. In the mean time, miss, do you step to Handy, and bid her get me some fresh night-clothes. *[Exit Lady Wrong.]*

Jenny. Yes, mamma, and some for myself too. *[Exit Jenny.]*

'Squ. Rich. Ods-flesh! and what mun I do all alone?

*I'll e'n seek out where t'other pratty miss is,
And sbe and I'll go play at cards for kisses.* *[Exit.]*

ACT III. SCENE I.

*Lord TOWNLY's House. Enter Lord TOWNLY, a
Servant attending.*

Lord Townly.

Who's there?

Serv. My lord.

Lord T. Bid them get dinner—Lady Grace, your servant.

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lady G. What, is the house up already? My lady is not drest yet.

Lord T. No matter—it's three o'clock—she may break my rest, but she shall not alter my hours.

Lady G. Nay, you need not fear that now, for she dines abroad.

Lord T. That, I suppose, is only an excuse for her not being ready yet.

Lady G. No, upon my word, she is engaged in company.

Lord T. Where, pray?

Lady G. At my Lady Revel's; and you know they never dine till supper-time.

Lord T. No, truly—she is one of those orderly ladies, who never let the sun shine upon any of their vices!—But pr'ythee, sister, what humour is she in to-day?

Lady G. Oh, in tip-top spirits, I can assure you—she won a good deal last night.

Lord T. I know no difference between her winning or losing, while she continues her course of life.

Lady G. However, she is better in good humour than bad.

Lord T. Much alike: when she is in good humour, other people only are the better for it; when in a very ill humour, then, indeed, I seldom fail to have my share of her.

Lady G. Well, we won't talk of that now—Does any body dine here?

Lord T. Manly promised me—By the way, madam, what do you think of his last conversation?

Lady G. I am a little at a stand about it.

Lord T. How so?

Lady G. Why—I don't know how he can ever have any thoughts of me, that could lay down such severe rules upon wives in my hearing.

Lord T. Did you think his rules unreasonable?

Lady G. I can't say I did! but he might have had a little more complaisance before me, at least.

Lord T. Complaisance is only a proof of good breeding; but his plainness was a certain proof of his honesty; nay, of his good opinion of you: for he would never have opened himself so freely, but in confidence that your good sense could not be disoblinded at it.

Lady G. My good opinion of him, brother, has hitherto been guided by yours: but I have received a letter this morning, that shews him a very different man from what I thought him.

Lord T. A letter! from whom?

Lady G. That I don't know; but there it is.

[*Gives a letter.*]

Lord T. Pray, let's see. [*Reads.*] 'The inclosed, madam, fell accidentally into my hands; if it no way concerns you, you will only have the trouble of reading this, from your sincere friend, and humble servant, Unknown, &c.'

Lady G. And this was the inclosed.

[*Gives another.*]

Lord T. [*Reads.*] 'To Charles Manly, Esq.'

'Your manner of living with me of late, convinces me that I now grow as painful to you as to myself: but, however, though you can love me no longer, I hope you will not let me live worse than I did, before I left an honest income for the vain hopes of being ever yours. MYRTILLA DUPE.'

'P. S. 'Tis above four months since I received a shilling from you.'

Lady G. What think you now?

Lord T. I am considering——

Lady G. You see it's directed to him——

Lord T. That's true ; but the postscript seems to be a reproach that I think he is not capable of deserving.

Lady G. But who could have concern enough to send it to me ?

Lord T. I have observed that these sort of letters from unknown friends generally come from secret enemies.

Lady G. What would you have me do in it ?

Lord T. What I think you ought to do—fairly shew it to him, and say I advised you to it.

Lady G. Will not that have a very odd look from me ?

Lord T. Not at all, if you use my name in it ; if he is innocent, his impatience to appear so will discover his regard to you. If he is guilty, it will be the best way of preventing his addresses.

Lady G. But what pretence have I to put him out of countenance ?

Lord T. I can't think there's any fear of that.

Lady G. Pray, what is it you do think then ?

Lord T. Why, certainly, that it's much more probable this letter may be all an artifice, than that he is in the least concerned in it—

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Manly, my lord.

Lord T. Do you receive him, while I step a minute in to my lady. *[Exit Lord Townly.]*

Enter MANLY.

Man. Madam, your most obedient ; they told me my lord was here.

Lady G. He will be here presently; he is but just gone in to my sister.

Man. So, then my lady dines with us.

Lady G. No; she is engaged.

Man. I hope you are not of her party, madam.

Lady G. Not till after dinner.

Man. And, pray, how may she have disposed of the rest of the day?

Lady G. Much as usual; she has visits till about eight; after that, till court-time, she is to be at quadrille, at Mrs. Idle's; after the drawing-room, she takes a short supper with my Lady Moonlight. And from thence they go together to my Lord Noble's assembly.

Man. And are you to do all this with her, madam?

Lady G. Only a few of the visits: I would, indeed, have drawn her to the play; but I doubt we have so much upon our hands, that it will not be practicable.

Man. But how can you forbear all the rest of it?

Lady G. There's no great merit in forbearing what one is not charmed with.

Man. And yet I have found that very difficult in my time.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Man. Why, I have passed a great deal of my life in the hurry of the ladies, though I was generally better pleased when I was at quiet without them.

Lady G. What induced you then to be with them?

Man. Idleness and the fashion.

Lady G. No mistresses in the case?

Man. To speak honestly—yes—Being often in the toy-shop, there was no forbearing the baubles.

Lady G. And of course, I suppose, sometimes you were tempted to pay for them twice as much as they were worth.

Man. Why, really, where fancy only makes the choice, madam, no wonder if we are generally bubbled in those sort of bargains; which, I confess, has been often my case: for I had constantly some coquette or other upon my hands, whom I could love, perhaps, just enough to put it in her power to plague me.

Lady G. And that's a power, I doubt, commonly made use of.

Man. The amours of a coquette, madam, seldom have any other view; I look upon them and prudes to be nuisances just alike, though they seem very different: the first are always plaguing the men, and the others are always abusing the women.

Lady G. And yet both of them do it for the same vain ends; to establish a false character of being virtuous.

Man. Of being chaste, they mean; for they know no other virtue; and, upon the credit of that, they traffic in every thing else that's vicious. They (even against nature) keep their chastity, only because they find they have more power to do mischief with it, than they could possibly put in practice without it.

"*Lady G.* Hold, Mr. Manly: I am afraid this severe opinion of the sex is owing to the ill choice you have made of your mistresses.

"*Man.* In a great measure it may be so; but, madam, if both these characters are so odious, how vastly valuable is that woman, who has attained all they aim at, without the aid of the folly or vice of either!

"*Lady G.* I believe those sort of women to be as scarce, sir, as the men that believe there are any such; or that, allowing such, have virtue enough to deserve them.

"*Man.* That could deserve them, then—had been a more favourable reflection."

"*Lady G.* Nay, I speak only from my little experience; for (I'll be free with you, Mr. Manly) I don't know a man in the world that, in appearance, might better pretend to a woman of the first merit than yourself; and yet I have a reason in my hand, here, to think you have your failings.

"*Man.* I have infinite, madam; but I am sure the want of an implicit respect for you, is not among the number—Pray, what is in your hand, madam?

"*Lady G.* Nay, sir, I have no title to it, for the direction is to you.

[*Gives him a letter.*

"*Man.* To me! I don't remember the hand.

[*Reads to himself.*

"*Lady G.* I can't perceive any change of guilt in him; and his surprise seems natural. [*Aside.*]—Give me leave to tell you one thing by the way, Mr. Manly; that I should never have shewn you this, but that my brother enjoined me to it.

Man. I take that to proceed from my Lord's good opinion of me, madam.

Lady G. I hope, at least, it will stand as an excuse for my taking this liberty.

Man. I never yet saw you do any thing, madam, that wanted an excuse; and I hope you will not give me an instance to the contrary, by refusing the favour I am going to ask you.

Lady G. I don't believe I shall refuse any that you think proper to ask.

Man. Only this, madam, to indulge me so far as to let me know how this letter came into your hands.

Lady G. Inclosed to me in this, without a name.

Man. If there be no secret in the contents, madam.—

Lady G. Why——there is an impertinent insinuation in it: but as I know your good sense will think it so too, I will venture to trust you.

Man. You'll oblige me, madam.

[*He takes the other letter and reads.*]

Lady G. [*Aside.*] Now am I in the oddest situation; methinks our conversation grows terribly critical. This must produce something——Oh, lud! would it were over.

Man. Now, madam, I begin to have some light into the poor project that is at the bottom of all this.

Lady G. I have no notion of what could be proposed by it.

Man. A little patience, madam——First, as to the insinuation you mention——

Lady G. O! what is he going to say now?

[*Aside.*]

Man. Though my intimacy with my lord may have allowed my visits to have been very frequent here of late; yet, in such a talking town as this, you must not wonder if a great many of those visits are placed to your account: and this taken for granted, I suppose, has been told to my Lady Wronghead, as a piece of news, since her arrival, not improbably with many more imaginary circumstances.

Lady G. My Lady Wronghead!

Man. Ay, madam; for I am positive this is her hand.

Lady G. What view could she have in writing it?

Man. To interrupt any treaty of marriage she may have heard I am engaged in; because, if I die without heirs, her family expects that some part of my estate may return to them again. But I hope she is so far mistaken, that if this letter has given you the least uneasiness—I shall think that the happiest moment of my life.

Lady G. That does not carry your usual complaisance, Mr. Manly!

Man. Yes, madam, because I am sure I can convince you of my innocence.

Lady G. I am sure I have no right to enquire into it.

Man. Suppose you may not, madam; yet you may very innocently have so much curiosity.

Lady G. With what an artful gentleness he steals into my opinion! [*Aside.*] Well, fir, I won't pre-

tend to have so little of the woman in me, as to want curiosity—But pray, do you suppose, then, this Myrtilla is a real, or a fictitious name?

Man. Now I recollect, madam, there is a young woman in the house where my Lady Wronghead lodges, that I heard somebody call Myrtilla: this letter may be written by her——But how it came directed to me, I confess, is a mystery, that, before I ever presume to see your ladyship again, I think myself obliged in honour to find out. [*Going.*]

Lady G. Mr. Manly—you are not going?

Man. 'Tis but to the next street, madam; I shall be back in ten minutes.

Lady G. Nay, but dinner's just coming ap.

Man. Madam, I can neither eat nor rest till I see an end of this affair.

Lady G. But this is so odd! why should any silly curiosity of mine drive you away?

Man. Since you won't suffer it to be yours, madam; then it shall be only to satisfy my own curiosity—— [*Exit Manly.*]

Lady G. Well—and now, what am I to think of all this? Or suppose an indifferent person had heard every word we have said to one another, what would they have thought on't? Would it have been very absurd to conclude, he is seriously inclined to pass the rest of his life with me?——I hope not—for I am sure the case is terribly clear on my side: and why may not I, without vanity, suppose my—unaccountable somewhat—has done as much execution upon him?—Why—because he never told me so—nay, he has not so much as mentioned the word

love, or ever said one civil thing to my person—well—but he has said a thousand to my good opinion, and has certainly got it—had he spoke first to my person, he had paid a very ill compliment to my understanding—I should have thought him impertinent, and never have troubled my head about him; but as he has managed the matter, at least I am sure of one thing, that let his thoughts be what they will, I shall never trouble my head about any other man as long as I live.

Enter Mrs. TRUSTY.

Well, Mrs. Trusty, is my sister dressed yet?

Trusty. Yes, madam; but my lord has been courting her so, I think, till they are both out of humour.

Lady G. How so?

Trusty. Why, it began, madam, with his lordship's desiring her ladyship to dine at home to-day—upon which my lady said she could not be ready; upon that my lord ordered them to stay the dinner; and then my lady ordered the coach: then my lord took her short, and said he had ordered the coachman to set up: then my lady made him a great curtsy, and said she would wait till his lordship's horses had dined, and was mighty pleasant: but, for fear of the worst, madam, she whispered me—to get her chair ready. [*Exit Trusty.*]

Lady G. Oh, here they come! and by their looks, seem a little unfit for company.

[*Exit Lady Grace.*]

Enter Lady TOWNLY, Lord TOWNLY following.

Lady T. Well, look you, my lord, I can bear it no longer; nothing still but about my faults, my faults: an agreeable subject, truly!

Lord T. Why, madam, if you won't hear of them, how can I ever hope to see you mend them?

Lady T. Why, I don't intend to mend them—I can't mend them—you know I have tried to do it a hundred times—and—it hurts me so—I can't bear it.

Lord T. And I, madam, can't bear this daily licentious abuse of your time and character.

Lady T. Abuse! astonishing! when the universe knows I am never better company than when I am doing what I have a mind to. But to see this world! that men can never get over that silly spirit of contradiction—Why, but last Thursday, now,—there you wisely amended one of my faults, as you call them—you insisted upon my not going to the masquerade, and pray, what was the consequence? Was not I as cross as the devil all the night after? Was not I forced to get company at home? And was it not almost three o'clock in the morning before I was able to come to myself again? And then the fault is not mended neither—for next time I shall only have twice the inclination to go: so that all this mending, and mending, you see, is but darning an old ruffle, to make it worse than it was before.

Lord T. Well, the manner of women's living of late is insupportable: and one way or other—

Lady T. It's to be mended, I suppose: why, so it may: but then, my dear lord, you must give one time—and when things are at the worst, you know, they may mend themselves, ha, ha!

Lord T. Madam, I am not in a humour now to trifle.

Lady T. Why then, my lord, one word of fair argument—to talk with you in your own way, now—You complain of my late hours, and I of your early ones—so far we are even, you'll allow, but pray, which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world; my active, spirited three in the morning, or your dull, drowsy eleven at night? Now, I think, one has the air of a woman of quality, and t'other of a plodding mechanic, that goes to bed betimes, that he may rise early to open his shop—Faugh!

Lord T. Fie, fie, madam! is this your way of reasoning? 'tis time to wake you, then—'Tis not your ill hours alone that disturb me, but as often the ill company that occasion those ill hours.

Lady T. Sure I don't understand you now, my lord; what ill company do I keep?

Lord T. Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it; or, perhaps, men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a lady will give them fair play at another. Then, that unavoidable mixture with known rakes, concealed thieves, and sharpers in embroidery—or, what, to me, is still more shocking, that herd of familiar, chattering, crop-eared coxcombs, who are so often like monkeys, there would be no knowing

them asunder, but that their tails hang from their heads, and the monkey's grows where it should do.

Lady T. And a husband must give eminent proof of his sense, that thinks their powder-puffs dangerous.

Lord T. Their being fools, madam, is not always the husband's security; or, if it were, fortune sometimes gives them advantages that might make a thinking woman tremble.

Lady T. What do you mean?

Lord T. That women sometimes lose more than they are able to pay: and if a creditor be a little pressing, the lady may be reduced to try, if, instead of gold, the gentleman will accept of a trinket.

Lady T. My lord, you grow scurrilous; you'll make me hate you. I'll have you to know, I keep company with the politest people in town, and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

Lord T. So are the churches——now and then.

Lady T. My friends frequent them too, as well as the assemblies.

Lord T. Yes, and would do it oftener, if a groom of the chambers were there allowed to furnish cards to the company.

Lady T. I see what you drive at all this while: you would lay an imputation on my fame, to cover your own avarice. I might take any pleasures, I find, that were not expensive.

Lord T. Have a care, madam; don't let me think you only value your chastity to make me reproachable for not indulging you in every thing else that's vicious.—I, madam, have a reputation, too, to

guard, that's dear to me as yours—The follies of an ungoverned wife may make the wisest man uneasy; but 'tis his own fault, if ever they make him contemptible.

Lady T. My lord—you would make a woman mad!

Lord T. You'd make a man a fool.

Lady T. If Heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

Lord T. Whatever may be in your inclination, madam, I'll prevent your making me a beggar, at least.

Lady T. A beggar! Croesus! I'm out of patience!—I won't come home till four to-morrow morning.

Lord T. That may be, madam; but I'll order the doors to be locked at twelve.

Lady T. Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

Lord T. Then, madam—you shall never come home again.

[*Exit Lord Townly.*]

Lady T. What does he mean? I never heard such a word from him in my life before! The man always used to have manners in his worst humours. There's something, that I don't see, at the bottom of all this—But his head's always upon some impracticable scheme or other: so I won't trouble mine any longer about him. Mr. Manly, your servant.

Enter MANLY.

Man. I ask pardon for intrusion, madam; but I hope my business with my lord will excuse it.

Lady T. I believe you'll find him in the next room, sir.

Man. Will you give me leave, madam?

Lady T. Sir—you have my leave, though you were a lady.

Man. [*Aside.*] What a well-bred age do we live in!

[*Exit Manly.*]

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lady T. Oh, my dear Lady Grace! how could you leave me so unmercifully alone all this while?

Lady G. I thought my lord had been with you.

Lady T. Why, yes—and therefore I wanted your relief; for he has been in such a flutter here—

Lady G. Bless me! for what?

Lady T. Only our usual breakfast; we have each of us had our dist of matrimonial comfort this morning—We have been charming company.

Lady G. I am mighty glad of it: sure it must be a vast happiness, when a man and a wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation!

Lady T. Oh, the prettiest thing in the world!

Lady G. Now I should be afraid, that where two people are every day together so, they must often be in want of something to talk upon.

Lady T. Oh, my dear, you are the most mistaken in the world! married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others.—Why, here's my lord and I, now, we have not been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that, whenever we want company,

we can take up any one of them for two hours together, and the subject never the flatter; nay, if we have occasion for it, it will be as fresh next day, too, as it was the first hour it entertained us.

Lady G. Certainly that must be vastly pretty.

Lady T. Oh, there's no life like it! Why, t'other day, for example, when you dined abroad, my lord and I, after a pretty cheerful *tête-à-tête* meal, sat us down by the fire-side in an easy, indolent, pick-tooth way, for about a quarter of an hour, as if we had not thought of any other's being in the room—At last, stretching himself, and yawning—My dear—says he—aw—you came home very late last night—'Twas but just turned of two, says I—I was in bed—aw—by eleven, says he—So you are every night, says I—Well, says he, I am amazed you can sit up so late—How can you be amazed, says I, at a thing that happens so often?—Upon which we entered into a conversation—and though this is a point has entertained us above fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon it, that I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.

Lady G. But pray, in such sort of family dialogues, (though extremely well for passing the time) don't there, now and then, enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

Lady T. Oh, yes! which does not do amiss at all. A smart repartee, with a zest of recrimination at the head of it, makes the prettiest sherbet. Ay, ay, if we did not mix a little of the acid with it, a matrimonial society would be so luscious, that

nothing but an old liquorish prude would be able to bear it.

Lady G. Well—certainly you have the most elegant taste——

Lady T. Though, to tell you the truth, my dear, I rather think we squeezed a little too much lemon into it, this bout! for it grew so sour at last, that——I think——I almost told him he was a fool——and he, again——talked something oddly of——turning me out of doors.

Lady G. Oh, have a care of that!

Lady T. Nay, if he should, I may thank my own wife father for that——

Lady G. How so?

Lady T. Why—when my good lord first opened his honourable trenches before me, my unaccountable papa, in whose hands I then was, gave me up at discretion.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Lady T. He said, the wives of this age were come to that pass, that he would not desire even his own daughter should be trusted with pin-money; so that my whole train of separate inclinations are left entirely at the mercy of a husband's odd humours.

Lady G. Why, that, indeed, is enough to make a woman of spirit look about her.

Lady T. Nay, but to be serious, my dear; what would you really have a woman do, in my case?

Lady G. Why—if I had a sober husband, as you have, I would make myself the happiest wife in the world, by being as sober as he.

Lady T. Oh, you wicked thing! how can you tease one at this rate; when you know he is so very sober, that (except giving me money) there is not one thing in the world he can do to please me. And I, at the same time, partly by nature, and partly, perhaps, by keeping the best company, do, with my soul, love almost every thing he hates. I dote upon assemblies; my heart bounds at a ball; and at an opera—I expire. Then I love play to distraction; cards enchant me—and dice—put me out of my little wits—Dear, dear hazard!—Oh, what a flow of spirits it gives one!—Do you never play at hazard, child?

Lady G. Oh, never! I don't think it fits well upon women; there's something so masculine, so much the air of a rake in it. You see how it makes the men swear and curse; and when a woman is thrown into the same passion—why——

Lady T. That's very true; one is a little put to it, sometimes, not to make use of the same words to express it.

Lady G. Well—and, upon ill luck, pray what words are you really forced to make use of?

Lady T. Why, upon a very hard case, indeed, when a sad wrong word is rising, just to one's tongue's end, I give a great gulp—and swallow it.

Lady G. Well—and is not that enough to make you forswear play as long as you live?

Lady T. Oh, yes: I have forsworn it.

Lady G. Seriously?

Lady T. Solemnly! a thousand times; but then one is constantly forsworn.

Lady G. And how can you answer that?

Lady T. My dear, what we say, when we are losers, we look upon to be no more binding than a lover's oath, or a great man's promise. But I beg pardon, child; I should not lead you so far into the world; you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

Lady G. Why, I confess, my nature and my education do, in a good degree, incline me that way.

Lady T. Well, how a woman of spirit (for you don't want that, child) can dream of living soberly, is to me inconceivable; for you will marry, I suppose.

Lady G. I can't tell but I may.

Lady T. And won't you live in town?

Lady G. Half the year, I should like it very well.

Lady T. My stars! and you would really live in London half the year to be sober in it?

Lady G. Why not?

Lady T. Why can't you as well go and be sober in the country?

Lady G. So I would—t'other half year.

Lady T. And pray, what comfortable scheme of life would you form, now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments?

Lady G. A scheme that I think might very well content us.

Lady T. Oh, of all things, let's hear it.

Lady G. Why, in summer, I could pass my leisure hours in riding, in reading, walking by a canal, or sitting at the end of it under a great tree; in

dress'ing, dining, chatting with an agreeable friend; perhaps, hearing a little music, taking a dish of tea, or a game of cards, soberly; managing my family, looking into its accounts, playing with my children, if I had any, or in a thousand other innocent amusements—soberly; and possibly, by these means, I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself.—

Lady T. Well, my dear, thou art an astonishing creature! For sure such primitive antediluvian notions of life have not been in any head these thousand years—Under a great tree! Oh, my soul!—But I beg we may have the sober town-scheme too—for I am charmed with the country one!—

Lady G. You shall, and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

Lady T. Well, though I'm sure it will give me the vapours, I must hear it however.

Lady G. Why then, for fear of your fainting, madam, I will first so far come into the fashion, that I would never be dress'd out of it—but still it should be soberly: for I can't think it any disgrace to a woman of my private fortune, not to wear her lace as fine as the wedding-suit of a first dutchess. Though there is one extravagance I would venture to come up to.

Lady T. Aye, now for it—

Lady G. I would every day be as clean as a bride.

Lady T. Why, the men say, that's a great step to be made one—Well now you are dress'd—Pray let's see to what purpose?

Lady G. I would visit—that is, my real friends; but as little for form as possible.—I would go to court; sometimes to an assembly, nay, play at quadrille—soberly: I would see all the good plays; and, because 'tis the fashion, now and then an opera—but I would not expire there, for fear I should never go again: and, lastly, I can't say, but for curiosity, if I liked my company, I might be drawn in once to a masquerade; and this, I think, is as far as any woman can go—soberly.

Lady T. Well, if it had not been for that last piece of sobriety, I was just going to call for some surfeit-water.

Lady G. Why, don't you think, with the farther aid of breakfasting, dining, and taking the air, supping, sleeping, not to say a word of devotion, the four and twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

Lady T. Tolerable! Deplorable! Why, child, all you purpose is but to endure life now I want to enjoy it——

Enter Mrs. TRUSTY.

Trusty. Madam, your ladyship's chair is ready.

Lady T. Have the footmen their white flambeaux yet? For last night I was poisoned.

Trusty. Yes, madam; there were some come in this morning. *[Exit Trusty.]*

Lady T. My dear, you will excuse me; but you know my time is so precious——

Lady G. That I beg I may not hinder your least enjoyment of it.

Lady T. You will call on me at lady Revel's?

Lady G. Certainly.

Lady T. But I am so afraid it will break into your scheme, my dear.

Lady G. When it does, I will——soberly break from you.

Lady T. Why then, 'till we meet again, dear sister, I wish you all tolerable happiness.

[*Exit Lady T.*]

Lady G. There she goes—Dash! into her stream of pleasures! Poor woman, she is really a fine creature; and sometimes infinitely agreeable; nay, take her out of the madness of this town, rational in her notions, and easy to live with: but she is so borne down by this torrent of vanity in vogue, she thinks every hour of her life is lost that she does not lead at the head of it. What it will end in, I tremble to imagine!—Ha, my brother, and Manly with him! I guess what they have been talking of——I shall hear it in my turn, I suppose, but it won't become me to be inquisitive.

[*Exit Lady Grace.*]

Enter Lord TOWNLY and MANLY.

Lord T. I did not think my Lady Wronghead had such a notable brain: though I can't say she was so very wise, in trusting this silly girl, you call Myrtilla, with the secret.

Man. No, my lord, you mistake me; had the girl been in the secret, perhaps I had never come at it myself.

Lord T. Why, I thought you said the girl writ this letter to you, and that my Lady Wronghead sent it inclosed to my sister?

Man. If you please to give me leave, my lord—the fact is thus—This inclosed letter to Lady Grace was a real original one, written by this girl, to the count we have been talking of: the count drops it, and my Lady Wronghead finds it: then only changing the cover, she seals it up as a letter of business, just written by herself, to me: and pretending to be in a hurry, gets this innocent girl to write the direction for her.

Lord T. Oh, then the girl did not know she was superscribing a billet-doux of her own to you?

Man. No, my lord; for when I first questioned her about the direction, she owned it immediately: but when I shewed her that her letter to the count was within it, and told her how it came into my hands, the poor creature was amazed, and thought herself betrayed both by the count and my lady—in short, upon this discovery, the girl and I grew so gracious, that she has let me into some transactions, in my Lady Wronghead's family, which, with my having a careful eye over them, may prevent the ruin of it.

Lord T. You are very generous, to be solicitous for a lady that has given you so much uneasiness.

Man. But I will be most unmercifully revenged of her: for I will do her the greatest friendship in the world—against her will.

Lord T. What an uncommon philosophy art thou master of, to make even thy malice a virtue!

Man. Yet, my lord, I assure you, there is no one action of my life gives me more pleasure than your approbation of it.

Lord T. Dear Charles! my heart's impatient 'till thou art nearer to me: and, as a proof that I have long wished thee so, while your daily conduct has chosen rather to deserve than ask my sister's favour, I have been as secretly industrious to make her sensible of your merit: and since on this occasion you have opened your whole heart to me, 'tis now with equal pleasure I assure you we have both succeeded — she is as firmly yours —

Man. Impossible! you flatter me!

Lord T. I'm glad you think it flattery: but she herself shall prove it none: she dines with us alone: when the servants are withdrawn, I'll open a conversation, that shall excuse my leaving you together — Oh, Charles! had I, like thee, been cautious in my choice, what melancholy hours had this heart avoided.

Man. No more of that, I beg, my lord —

Lord T. But 'twill, at least, be some relief to my anxiety, however barren of content the state has been to me, to see so near a friend and sister happy in it. Your harmony of life will be an instance how much the choice of temper is preferable to beauty.

While your soft hours in mutual kindness move,

You'll reach by virtue what I lost by love. [Exeunt.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Mrs. MOTHERLY's House. Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY, meeting MYRTILLA.

Motherly.

So, niece! where is it possible you can have been these six hours?

Myr. Oh, madam, I have such a terrible story to tell you.

Moth. A story! Ods my life! What have you done with the count's note of five hundred pounds, I sent you about? Is it safe? Is it good? Is it security?

Myr. Yes, yes, it is safe: but for its goodness—Mercy on us! I have been in a fair way to be hanged about it.

Moth. The dickens! has the rogue of a count played us another trick then?

Myr. You shall hear, madam; when I came to Mr. Cash, the banker's, and shewed him his note for five hundred pounds, payable to the count, or order, in two months—he looked earnestly upon it, and desired me to step into the inner room, while he examined his books—after I had stayed about ten minutes, he came in to me—claps to the door, and charges me with a constable for forgery.

Moth. Ah, poor soul! and how didst thou get off?

Myr. While I was ready to sink in this condition, I begged him to have a little patience, 'till I

could send for Mr. Manly, whom he knew to be a gentleman of worth and honour, and who, I was sure, would convince him, whatever fraud might be in the note, that I was myself an innocent abused woman——and, as good luck would have it, in less than half an hour, Mr. Manly came——so, without mincing the matter, I fairly told him upon what design the count had lodged that note in your hands, and, in short, laid open the whole scheme he had drawn us into to make our fortune.

Moth. The devil you did!

Myr. Why, how do you think it was possible I could any otherwise make Mr. Manly my friend, to help me out of the scrape I was in? To conclude, he soon made Mr. Cash easy, and sent away the constable: nay, farther, he promised me, if I would trust the note in his hands, he would take care it should be fully paid before it was due, and at the same time would give me an ample revenge upon the count; so that all you have to consider now, madam, is, whether you think yourself safer in the count's hands, or Mr. Manly's.

Moth. Nay, nay, child; there is no choice in the matter! Mr. Manly may be a friend indeed, if any thing in our power can make him so.

Myr. Well, madam, and now, pray, how stand matters at home here? What has the count done with the ladies?

Moth. Why, every thing he has a mind to do, by this time, I suppose. He is in as high favour with miss, as he is with my lady.

Myr. Pray, where are the ladies?

Moth. Rattling abroad in their own coach, and the well-bred count along with them: they have been scouring all the shops in town over, buying fine things and new clothes from morning to night: they have made one voyage already, and have brought home such a cargo of bawbles and trumpery—Mercy on the poor man that's to pay for them!

Myr. Did not the young 'squire go with them?

Moth. No, no; miss said, truly he would but disgrace their party: so they even left him asleep by the kitchen fire.

Myr. Has not he ask'd after me all this while? For I had a sort of an assignation with him.

Moth. Oh, yes, he has been in a bitter taking about it. At last his disappointment grew so uneasy, that he fairly fell a crying; so to quiet him, I sent one of the maids and John Moody abroad with him to shew him—the lions, and the monument. Ods me! there he is just come home again—You may have business with him—so I'll even turn you together. [Exit.]

Enter 'Squire RICHARD.

'Squ. Rich. Soah, soah, Mrs. Myrtilla, where han yaw been aw this day, forsooth?

Myr. Nay, if you go to that, 'squire, where have you been, pray?

'Squ. Rich. Why, when I fun' at yow were no loikly to come whoam, I were ready to hong my sel——so John Moody, and I, and one o' your

lasses, have been——Lord knows where——a seeing o' the foights.

Myr. Well, and pray what have you seen, sir?

'Squ. Rich. Flesh! I cawnt tell, not I—seen every thing, I think. First, there we went o' top o' the what d'ye call it? there, the great huge stone post, up the rawnd and rawnd stairs, that twine and twine about just an as thof it was a cork-screw.

Myr. Oh, the monument; well, and was it not a fine fight from the top of it?

'Squ. Rich. Sight, miss! I know no'——I saw nought but smoak and brick housen, and steeple tops——then there was such a mortal ting-tang of bells, and rumbling of carts and coaches, and then the folks under one looked so small, and made such a hum, and a buz, it put me in mind of my mother's great glafs bee-hive in our garden in the country.

Myr. I think, master, you give a very good account of it.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, but I did not like it: for my head—my head—began to turn—so I trundled me down stairs agen like a round trencher.

Myr. Well, but this was not all you saw, I suppose?

'Squ. Rich. Noa, noa, we went after that, and saw the lions, and I liked them better by hawlf; they are pure grim devils; hoh, hoh! I touke a stick, and gave one of them such a poke o' the noafe—I believe he would ha' snapt my head off, an he could have got me. Hoh! hoh! hoh!

Myr. Well, master, when you and I go abroad, I'll shew you prettier fights than these——there's a masquerade to-morrow.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, laud, ay! they say that's a pure thing for Merry Andrews, and those sort of comical mummers—and the count tells me, that there lads and lasses may jig their tails, and eat, and drink, without grudging, all night long.

Myr. What would you say now, if I should get you a ticket, and go along with you?

'Squ. Rich. Ah, dear!

Myr. But have a care, 'squire, the fine ladies there are terribly tempting; look well to your heart, or, ads me! they'll whip it up in the trip of a minute.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, but they cawnt thoa—soa let 'um look to themselves, an' ony of 'um falls in love with me—mayhap they had as good be quiet.

Myr. Why sure you would not refuse a fine lady, would you?

'Squ. Rich. Ay, but I would though, unless it were—one as I know of.

Myr. Oh, oh, then you have left your heart in the country, I find?

'Squ. Rich. Noa, noa, my heart—eh—my heart e'nt awt o' this room.

Myr. I am glad you have it about you, however.

'Squ. Rich. Nay, mayhap not soa neather, somebody else may have it, 'at you little think of.

Myr. I can't imagine what you mean!

'Squ. Rich. Noa! why don't you know how many folks there is in this room, naw?

Myr. Very fine, master, I see you have learnt the town gallantry already.

'Squ. Rich. Why doan't you believe 'at I have a kindness for you then?

Myr. Fy, fy, master, how you talk; beside, you are too young to think of a wife.

'Squ. Rich. Ay! but I caunt help thinking o' yow, for all that.

Myr. How! why sure, fir, you don't pretend to think of me in a dishonourable way?

'Squ. Rich. Nay, that's as you see good—I did no' think 'at you would ha' thought of me for a husband, mayhap; unless I had means, in my own hands; and feyther allows me but haulf a crown a week, as yet awhile.

Myr. Oh, when I like any body, 'tis not want of money will make me refuse them.

'Squ. Rich. Well, that's just my mind now; for an I like a girl, miss, I would take her in her smock.

Myr. Ay, master, now you speak like a man of honour; this shews something of a true heart in you.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, and a true heart you'll find me; try when you will.

Myr. Hush, hush, here's your papa come home, and my aunt with him.

'Squ. Rich. A devil rive 'em, what do they come naw for?

Myr. When you and I get to the masquerade, you shall see what I'll say to you.

'Squ. Rich. Well, hands upon't, then——

Myr. There——

'Squ. Rich. One buss, and a bargain. [*Kisses her.*]
Ads wauntlikins! as soft and plump as a marrow-
pudding. [*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD and Mrs.

MOTHERLY.

Sir Fran. What! my wife and daughter abroad,
say you?

Moth. Oh, dear fir, they have been mighty busy
all the day long; they just came home to snap up a
short dinner, and so went out again.

Sir Fran. Well, well, I sha'n't stay supper for
'em, I can tell 'em that: for ods-heart, I have
nothing in me, but a toast and a tankard, since
morning.

Moth. I am afraid, fir, these late parliament hours
won't agree with you.

Sir Fran. Why, truly, Mrs. Motherly, they don't
do right with us country gentlemen; to lose one
meal out of three, is a hard tax upon a good sto-
mach.

Moth. It is so indeed, fir.

Sir Fran. But howsomever, Mrs. Motherly, when
we consider, that what we suffer is for the good of
our country——

Moth. Why truly, fir, that is something.

Sir Fran. Oh, there's a great deal to be said for't
——the good of one's country is above all things——
A true-hearted Englishman thinks nothing too much
for it——I have heard of some honest gentlemen so

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very zealous, that for the good of their country——they would sometimes go to dinner at midnight.

Moth. Oh, that goodness of 'em! sure their country must have a vast esteem for them?

Sir Fran. So they have, Mrs. Motherly; they are so respected when they come home to their boroughs after a session, and so beloved——that their country will come and dine with them every day in the week.

Moth. Dear me! What a fine thing 'tis to be so populous!

Sir Fran. It is a great comfort, indeed! and, I can assure you, you are a good sensible woman, Mrs. Motherly.

Moth. Oh, dear sir, your honour's pleased to compliment.

Sir Fran. No, no, I see you know how to value people of consequence.

Moth. Good lack! here's company, sir; will you give me leave to get you a little something 'till the ladies come home, sir?

Sir Fran. Why, troth, I don't think it would be amiss.

Moth. It shall be done in a moment, sir. [*Exit.*]

Enter MANLY.

Man. Sir Francis, your servant.

Sir Fran. Cousin Manly.

Man. I am come to see how the family goes on here.

Sir Fran. Troth! all as busy as bees; I have been upon the wing ever since eight o'clock this morning.

Man. By your early hour, then, I suppose you have been making your court to some of the great men.

Sir Fran. Why, faith! you have hit it, fir—— I was advis'd to lose no time: so I e'en went straight forward to one great man I had never seen in my life before.

Man. Right! that was doing business: but who had you got to introduce you?

Sir Fran. Why, nobody—— I remember I had heard a wise man say—My son, be bold—so troth! I introduced myself.

Man. As how, pray?

Sir Fran. Why, thus—— Look ye—— Please your lordship, says I, I am Sir Francis Wronghead, of Bumper-hall, and member of parliament for the borough of Guzzledown—— Sir, your humble servant, says my lord; thof I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative; and so, says he, Sir Francis, have you any service to command me? Naw, cousin, those last words, you may be sure, give me no small encouragement. And thof I know, fir, you have no extraordinary opinion of my parts, yet I believe, you won't say I mist it naw!

Man. Well, I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fran. So, when I found him so courteous— My lord, says I, I did not think to ha' troubled your lordship with business upon my first visit: but, since your lordship is pleas'd not to stand upon ce-

remony,—why truly, says I, I think naw is as good as another time.

Man. Right! there you pushed him home.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, I had a mind to let him see that I was none of your mealy-mouthed ones.

Man. Very good.

Sir Fran. So, in short, my lord, says I, I have a good estate—but—a—it's a little awt at elbows: and, as I desire to serve my king as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Man. So, this was making short work on't.

Sir Fran. I'cod! I shot him flying, cousin: some of you hawf-witted ones, naw, would ha' hummed and hawed, and dangled a month or two after him, before they durst open their mouths about a place, and, mayhap, not ha' got it at last neither.

Man. Oh, I'm glad you're so sure on't—

Sir Fran. You shall hear, cousin——Sir Francis, says my lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha' turned your thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be chusers; but ony place, says I, about a thousand a-year, will be well enough to be doing with, 'till something better falls in—for I thought it would not look well to stond haggling with him at first.

Man. No, no, your business was to get footing any way.

Sir Fran. Right! there's it! ay, cousin, I see you know the world.

Man. Yes, yes, one sees more of it every day—Well, but what said my lord to all this?

Sir Fran. Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you any way that lies in my power; so he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, give yourself no trouble——I'll do your business; with that he turned him abawt to somebody with a coloured ribbon across here, that looked, in my thoughts, as if he came for a place too.

Man. Ha! so, upon these hopes, you are to make your fortune!

Sir Fran. Why, do you think there's any doubt of it, sir?

Man. Oh, no, I have not the least doubt about it—for just as you have done, I made my fortune ten years ago.

Sir Fran. Why, I never knew you had a place, cousin.

Man. Nor I neither, upon my faith, cousin. But you, perhaps, may have better fortune: for I suppose my lord has heard of what importance you were in the debate to-day——You have been since down at the house, I presume.

Sir Fran. Oh, yes! I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

Man. Well, and pray what have they done there?

Sir Fran. Why, troth! I can't well tell you what they have done, but I can tell you what I did: and I think pretty well in the main; only I happened to make a little mistake at last, indeed.

Man. How was that?

Sir Fran. Why, they were all got there into a sort of a puzzling debate about the good of the nation—and I were always for that, you know—but,

in short, the arguments were so long-winded o' both sides, that, waunds! I did not well understand 'um: hawfomever, I was convinced, and so resolved to vote right, according to my conscience——so when they came to put the question, as they call it,——I don't know haw 'twas——but I doubt I cried ay! when I should ha' cried no!

Man. How came that about?

Sir Fran. Why, by a mistake, as I tell you——for there was a good-humoured sort of a gentleman, one Mr. Totherside, I think they call him, that sat next me, as soon as I had cried ay! gives me a hearty shake by the hand. Sir, says he, you are a man of honour, and a true Englishman! and I should be proud to be better acquainted with you——and so, with that he takes me by the sleeve, along with the crowd into the lobby——so, I knew nowght——but ods flesh! I was got o' the wrung side the post——for I were told, afterwards, I should have staid where I was.

Man. And so, if you had not quite made your fortune before, you have clinched it now!——Ah, thou head of the Wrongheads. [*Aside.*]

Sir Fran. Odsfo! here's my lady come home at last——I hope, cousin, you will be so kind as to take a family supper with us?

Man. Another time, Sir Francis; but to-night I am engaged.

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD, Miss JENNY, and Count BASSET.

Lady Wrong. Cousin, your servant; I hope you will pardon my rudeness; but we have really been

in such a continual hurry here, that we have not had a leisure moment to return your last visit.

Man. Oh, madam, I am a man of no ceremony; you see that has not hindered my coming again.

Lady Wrong. You are infinitely obliging; but I'll redeem my credit with you.

Man. At your own time, madam.

Count Bas. I must say that for Mr. Manly, madam; if making people easy is the rule of good-breeding, he is certainly the best-bred man in the world.

Man. Soh! I am not to drop my acquaintance, I find—[*Aside.*] I am afraid, sir, I shall grow vain upon your good opinion.

Count Bas. I don't know that, sir; but I am sure what you are pleased to say makes me so.

Man. The most impudent modesty that ever I met with. [*Aside.*]

Lady Wrong. Lard! how ready his wit is. [*Aside.*]

Sir Fran. Don't you think, sir, the count's a very fine gentleman? [*Apart.*]

Man. Oh, among the ladies, certainly. [*Apart.*]

Sir Fran. And yet he's as stout as a lion. Waund, he'll storm any thing. [*Apart.*]

Man. Will he so? Why then, sir, take care of your citadel. [*Apart.*]

Sir Fran. Ah, you are a wag, cousin. [*Apart.*]

Man. I hope, ladies, the town air continues to agree with you.

Jenny. Oh, perfectly well, sir! We have been abroad in our new coach all day long—and we have bought an ocean of fine things. And to-mor-

row we go to the masquerade; and on Friday to the play; and on Saturday to the opera; and on Sunday we are to be at the what-d'ye call it—— assembly, and see the ladies play at quadrille, and piquet, and ombre, and hazard, and basset; and on Monday we are to see the king; and so on Tuesday——

Lady Wrong. Hold, hold, miss! you must not let your tongue run so fast, child—you forget; you know I brought you hither to learn modesty.

Man. Yes, yes! and she is improved with a vengeance——

Aside.

Jenny. Lawrd! mamma, I am sure I did not say any harm; and if one must not speak in one's turn, one may be kept under as long as one lives, for aught I see.

Lady Wrong. O' my conscience, this girl grows so headstrong——

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, there's your fine growing spirit for you! Now tack it down an' you can.

Jenny. All I said, papa, was only to entertain my cousin Manly.

Man. My pretty dear, I am mightily obliged to you.

Jenny. Look you there now, madam.

Lady Wrong. Hold your tongue, I say.

Jenny. [*Turning away and glowing.*] I declare it, I won't bear it: she is always snubbing me before you, sir!——I know why she does it, well enough——

[*Aside to the Count.*

Count Bas. Hush, hush, my dear! don't be uneasy at that; she'll suspect us. [*Aside.*

Jenny. Let her suspect, what do I care—I don't know but I have as much reason to suspect as she—though perhaps I am not so afraid of her.

Count Bas. [*Aside.*] I'gad, if I don't keep a tight hand on my tit here, she'll run away with my project before I can bring it to bear.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*] Perpetually hanging upon him! The young harlot is certainly in love with him; but I must not let them see I think so—and yet I can't bear it. Upon my life, count, you'll spoil that forward girl—you should not encourage her so.

Count Bas. Pardon me, madam, I was only advising her to observe what your ladyship said to her.

Man. Yes, truly, her observations have been something particular. [*Aside.*]

Count Bas. In one word, madam, she has a jealousy of your ladyship, and I am forced to encourage her, to blind it; 'twill be better to take no notice of her behaviour to me. [*Apart.*]

Lady Wrong. You are right, I will be more cautious. [*Apart.*]

Count Bas. To-morrow, at the masquerade, we may lose her. [*Apart.*]

Lady Wrong. We shall be observed; I'll send you a note, and settle that affair—go on with the girl, and don't mind me. [*Apart.*]

Count Bas. I have been taking your part, my little angel.

Lady Wrong. Jenny! come hither, child—you must not be so hasty, my dear—I only advise you for your good.

Jenny. Yes, mamma; but when I am told of a thing before company, it always makes me worse, you know.

Man. If I have any skill in the fair sex, miss and her mamma have only quarrelled because they are both of a mind. This facetious count seems to have made a very genteel step into the family. [*Aside.*

Enter MYRTILLA. MANLY talks apart with her.

Lady Wrong. Well, Sir Francis, and what news have you brought us from Westminster to-day?

Sir Fran. News, madam! I'cod! I have some—and such as does not come every day, I can tell you—a word in your ear—I have got a promise of a place at court of a thousand pawnd a-year already.

Lady Wrong. Have you so, sir? And pray who may you thank for't? Now! who is in the right? Is not this better than throwing so much away after a stinking pack of fox-hounds in the country? Now your family may be the better for it.

Sir Fran. Nay, that's what persuaded me to come up, my dove.

Lady Wrong. Mighty well—come—let me have another hundred pound then.

Sir Fran. Another! child? Waunds! you have had one hundred this morning, pray what's become of that, my dear?

Lady Wrong. What's become of it! Why, I'll shew you, my love! Jenny, have you the bills about you?

Jenny. Yes, mamma.

Lady Wrong. What's become of it! Why, laid out, my dear, with fifty more to it, that I was forced to borrow of the count here.

Jenny. Yes, indeed, papa, and that would hardly do neither—There's the account.

Sir Fran. [*Turning over the bills.*] Let's see! let's see! what the devil have we got here?

Man. Then you have founded your aunt you say, and she readily comes into all I proposed to you.

[*Apart.*]

Myr. Sir, I'll answer, with my life, she is most thankfully yours in every article. She mightily desires to see you, sir.

[*Apart.*]

Man. I am going home, directly; bring her to my house in half an hour; and if she makes good what you tell me, you shall both find your account in it.

[*Apart.*]

Myr. Sir, she shall not fail you.

[*Apart.*]

Sir Fran. Ods-life! madam, here's nothing but toys and trinkets, and fans, and clock stockings, by wholesale.

Lady Wrong. There's nothing but what's proper, and for your credit, Sir Francis—Nay, you see I am so good a housewife, that in necessaries for myself I have scarce laid out a shilling.

Sir Fran. No, by my troth, so it seems; for the devil o' one thing's here that I can see you have any occasion for.

Lady Wrong. My dear, do you think I came hither to live out of the fashion! why, the greatest distinction of a fine lady in this town is the variety of pretty things that she has no occasion for.

Jenny. Sure, papa, could you imagine, that women of quality wanted nothing but stays and petticoats?

Lady Wrong. Now, that is so like him!

Man. So the family comes on finely. [*Aside.*

Lady Wrong. Lard, if men were always to govern, what dowdies they would reduce their wives to!

Sir Fran. An hundred pounds in the morning, and want another afore night! Waunds and fire! the lord mayor of London could not hold at this rate!

Man. Oh, do you feel it, fir? [*Aside.*

Lady Wrong. My dear, you seem uneasy; let me have the hundred pound, and compose yourself.

Sir Fran. Compose the devil, madam! why do you consider what a hundred pounds a-day comes to in a year?

Lady Wrong. My life, if I account with you from one day to another, that's really all my head is able to bear at a time—But I'll tell you what I consider—I consider that my advice has got you a thousand pound a-year this morning—That, now, methinks, you might consider, fir.

Sir Fran. A thousand a-year? Waunds, madam, but I have not touched a penny of it yet!

Man. Nor ever will, I'll answer for him. [*Aside.*

Enter 'Squire RICHARD.

'Squ. Rich. Feyther, an you doan't come quickly, the meat will be coaled: and I'd fain pick a bit with you.

Lady Wrong. Bless me, Sir Francis! you are not going to sup by yourself.

Sir Fran. No, but I'm going to dine by myself, and that's pretty near the matter, madam.

Lady Wrong. Had not you as good stay a little, my dear. We shall all eat in half an hour; and I was thinking to ask my cousin Manly to take a family morsel with us.

Sir Fran. Nay, for my cousin's good company, I don't care if I ride a day's journey without baiting.

Man. By no means, Sir Francis. I am going upon a little business.

Sir Fran. Well, fir, I know you don't love compliments.

Man. You'll excuse me, madam——

Lady Wrong. Since you have business, fir——

[*Exit Manly.*]

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Oh, Mrs. Motherly! you were saying this morning you had some very fine lace to shew me—cann't I see it now?

[*Sir Francis stares.*]

Moth. Why, really, madam, I had made a sort of a promise to let the Countess of Nicely have the first sight of it for the birth-day: but your ladyship——

Lady Wrong. Oh, I die if I don't see it before her.

'*Squ. Rich.* Woan't you go, feyther? [*Apart.*]

Sir Fran. Waunds, lad! I shall ha' noa stomach at this rate.

[*Apart.*]

Moth. Well, madam, though I say it, 'tis the sweetest pattern that ever came over—and for fineness——no cobweb comes up to it.

Sir Fran. Ods guts and gizzard, madam! Lace as fine as a cobweb! why, what the devil's that to cost now?

Moth. Nay, if Sir Francis does not like it, madam——

Lady Wrong. He like it! Dear Mrs. Motherly, he is not to wear it.

Sir Fran. Flesh, madam! but I suppose I am to pay for it.

Lady Wrong. No doubt on't! Think of your thousand a-year, and who got it you; go! eat your dinner, and be thankful, go. [*Driving him to the door.*] Come, Mrs. Motherly.

[*Exit Lady Wronghead with Mrs. Motherly.*]

Sir Fran. Very fine! so here I mun fast, till I am almost famished, for the good of my country, while madam is laying me out an hundred pounds a-day in lace as fine as a cobweb, for the honour of my family! Ods flesh! things had need go well at this rate!

'*Squ. Rich.* Nay, nay—come, feyther.

[*Exeunt Sir Fran. and 'Squ. Rich.*]

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Moth. Madam, my lady desires you and the count will please to come and assist her fancy in some of the new laces.

Count Bas. We'll wait upon her——

[*Exit Mrs. Motherly.*]

Jenny. So, I told you how it was! you see she can't bear to leave us together.

Count Bas. No matter, my dear: you know she has ask'd me to stay supper: so when your papa

and she are a-bed, Mrs. Myrtilla will let me into the house again; then you may steal into her chamber, and we'll have a pretty sneaker of punch together.

Myr. Ay, ay, madam, you may command me in any thing.

Jenny. Well, that will be pure!

Count Bas. But you had best go to her alone, my life: it will look better if I come after you.

Jenny. Ay, so it will: and to-morrow you know at the masquerade: And then!——

“ SONG.

“ *Oh, I'll have a husband! ay, marry;*

“ *For why should I longer tarry,*

“ *For why should I longer tarry,*

“ *Than other brisk girls have done?*

“ *For if I stay 'till I grow grey,*

“ *They'll call me old maid, and fusty old jade;*

“ *So I'll no longer tarry;*

“ *But I'll have a husband, ay, marry,*

“ *If money can buy me one.*

“ *My mother, she says, I'm too coming;*

“ *And still in my ears she is drumming,*

“ *And still in my ears she is drumming,*

“ *That I such vain thoughts shou'd shun.*

“ *My sisters they cry, oh, fy! and, oh, fy!*

“ *But yet I can see, they're as coming as me;*

“ *So let me have husbands in plenty:*

“ *I'd rather have twenty times twenty,*

“ *Than die an old maid undone.”*

[Exit.

Myr. So, fir, am not I very commode to you?

Count Bas. Well, child, and don't you find your account in it? Did I not tell you we might still be of use to one another?

Myr. Well, but how stands your affair with miss in the main?

Count Bas. Oh, she's mad for the masquerade! It drives like a nail; we want nothing now but a parson to clinch it. Did not your aunt say she could get one at a short warning?

Myr. Yes, yes, my Lord Townly's chaplain is her cousin, you know; he'll do your business and mine, at the same time.

Count Bas. Oh, it's true! but where shall we appoint him?

Myr. Why, you know my Lady Townly's house is always open to the masks upon a ball-night, before they go to the Hay-market.

Count Bas. Good.

Myr. Now the doctor purposes we should all come thither in our habits, and when the rooms are full, we may steal up into his chamber, he says, and there—crack—he'll give us all canonical commission to go to-bed together.

Count Bas. Admirable! Well the devil fetch me, if I shall not be heartily glad to see thee well settled, child.

Myr. And may the black gentleman tuck me under his arm at the same time, if I shall not think myself obliged to you as long as I live.

Count Bas. One kiss for old acquaintance sake—I'gad I shall want to be busy again.

Myr. Oh, you'll have one shortly will find you employment: but I must run to my 'squire.

Count Basf. And I to the ladies—so your humble servant, sweet Mrs. Wronghead.

Myr. Yours, as in duty bound, most noble Count Bassett. [Exit Myr.]

Count Basf. Why, ay! count! That title has been of some use to me indeed; not that I have any more pretence to it than I have to a blue ribband. Yet, I have made a pretty considerable figure in life with it. I have lolled in my own chariot, dealt at assemblies, dined with ambassadors, and made one at quadrille with the first woman of quality—But—*tempora mutantur*—since that damn'd squadron at White's have left me out of their last secret, I am reduced to trade upon my own stock of industry, and make my last push upon a wife. If my card comes up right (which, I think, cannot fail) I shall once more cut a figure, and cock my hat in the face of the best of them: for since our modern men of fortune are grown wise enough to be sharpers, I think sharpers are fools that don't take up the airs of men of quality. [Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lord Townly's House. “Enter MANLY and Lady GRACE.

“*Manly.*

“THERE's something, madam, hangs upon your mind, to-day: is it unfit to trust me with it?

" *Lady G.* Since you will know—my sister, then
" —unhappy woman!

" *Man.* What of her?

" *Lady G.* I fear is on the brink of ruin.

" *Man.* I am sorry for it—What has happened?

" *Lady G.* Nothing so very new; but the continual repetition of it, at last has raised my brother to an intemperance that I tremble at.

" *Man.* Have they had any words upon it?

" *Lady G.* He has not seen her since yesterday.

" *Man.* What! not at home all night?

" *Lady G.* About five this morning, in she came; but with such looks, and such an equipage of misfortunes at her heels—What can become of her?

" *Man.* Has not my lord seen her, say you?

" *Lady G.* No; he changed his bed last night—I sat with him alone till twelve, in expectation of her: but when the clock struck, he started from his chair, and grew incensed to that degree, that had I not, almost on my knees, dissuaded him, he had ordered the doors, that instant, to have been locked against her.

" *Man.* How terrible is his situation! when the most justifiable severities he can use against her are liable to be the mirth of all the dissolute card-tables in town.

" *Lady G.* 'Tis that, I know, has made him bear so long: but you that feel for him, Mr. Manly, will assist him to support his honour, and, if possible, preserve his quiet; therefore I beg you don't leave the house, till one or both of them can be wrought to better temper.

" *Man.* How amiable is this concern in you!

" *Lady G.* For Heaven's sake, don't mind me;
" but think on something to preserve us all.

" *Man.* I shall not take the merit of obeying
" your commands, madam, to serve my lord—But,
" pray, madam, let me into all that has past since
" yesternight.

" *Lady G.* When my intreaties had prevailed
" upon my lord, not to make a story for the town,
" by so public a violence, as shutting her at once
" out of his doors, he ordered an apartment next to
" my lady's to be made ready for him—While that
" was doing, I tried, by all the little arts I was
" mistress of, to amuse him into temper; in short,
" a silent grief was all I could reduce him to—On
" this, we took our leaves, and parted to our re-
" pose: what his was, I imagine by my own; for
" I ne'er closed my eyes. About five, as I told
" you, I heard my lady at the door; so I slipped on
" a gown, and sat almost an hour with her in her
" own chamber.

" *Man.* What said she, when she did not find my
" lord there?

" *Lady G.* Oh! so far from being shocked or
" alarmed at it, that she blessed the occasion; and
" said that, in her condition, the chat of a female
" friend was far preferable to the best husband's
" company in the world.

" *Man.* Where has she the spirits to support so
" much insensibility?

" *Lady G.* Nay, 'tis incredible; for though she
" had lost every shilling she had in the world, and

“ stretched her credit even to breaking, she rallied
“ her own follies with such vivacity, and painted
“ the penance she knows she must undergo for them
“ in such ridiculous lights, that had not my concern
“ for a brother been too strong for her wit, she had
“ almost disarmed my anger.

“ *Man.* Her mind may have another cast by this
“ time: the most flagrant dispositions have their
“ hours of anguish, which their pride conceals from
“ company. But pray, madam, how could she
“ avoid coming down to dine?

“ *Lady G.* Oh! she took care of that before she
“ went to bed, by ordering her woman, whenever
“ she was asked for, to say she was not well.

“ *Man.* You have seen her since she was up, I
“ presume.

“ *Lady G.* Up! I question whether she be awake
“ yet.

“ *Man.* Terrible! what a figure does she make
“ now! That nature should throw away so much
“ beauty upon a creature, to make such a flatteringly
“ use of it!

“ *Lady G.* Oh, fie! there is not a more elegant
“ beauty in town, when she is dressed.

“ *Man.* In my eye, madam, she that's early dressed
“ has ten times her elegance.

“ *Lady G.* But she won't be long now, I believe;
“ for I think I see her chocolate going up—
“ Mrs. Trusty—a-hem!

“ *Mrs. TRUSTY comes to the door.*

“ *Man.* [*Aside.*] Five o'clock in the afternoon
“ for a lady of quality's breakfast is an elegant hour

" indeed! which, to shew her more polite way of living too, I presume she eats in her bed.

" *Lady G.* [*To Mrs. Trusty.*] And when she is up, I would be glad she would let me come to her toilet—That's all, Mrs. Trusty.

" *Trusty.* I will be sure to let her ladyship know, madam. [*Exit.*

" *Enter a Servant.*

" *Serv.* Sir Francis Wronghead, sir, desires to speak with you.

" *Man.* He comes unseasonably—What shall I do with him?

" *Lady G.* Oh, see him, by all means! we shall have time enough; in the mean while, I'll step in and have an eye upon my brother. Nay, don't mind me—you have business—

" *Man.* You must be obeyed—

" [*Retreating, while Lady Grace goes out.*

" Desire Sir Francis to walk in—[*Exit Servant.*] I suppose, by this time, his wife worship begins to find that the balance of his journey to London is on the wrong side."

Enter Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Francis, your servant. How came I by the favour of this extraordinary visit?

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin!

Man. Why that sorrowful face, man?

Sir Fran. I have no friend alive but you—

Man. I am sorry for that—But what's the matter?

Sir Fran. I have played the fool by this journey, I see now—for my bitter wife—

Man. What of her?

Sir Fran. Is playing the devil.

Man. Why, truly, that's a part that most of your fine ladies begin with, as soon as they get to London.

Sir Fran. If I'm a living man, cousin, she has made away with above two hundred and fifty pounds since yesterday morning.

Man. Ha! I see a good housewife will do a great deal of work in a little time.

Sir Fran. Work, do they call it? Fine work, indeed!

Man. Well, but how do you mean made away with it? What, she has laid it out, may be—but I suppose you have an account of it.

Sir Fran. Yes, yes, I have had the account, indeed; but I mun needs say, it's a very sorry one.

Man. Pray, let's hear?

Sir Fran. Why, first I let her have an hundred and fifty, to get things handsome about her, to let the world see that I was somebody; and I thought that sum was very genteel.

Man. Indeed I think so; and in the country might have served her a twelvemonth.

Sir Fran. Why, so it might—but here, in this fine town, forsooth, it could not get through four-and-twenty hours—for in half that time it was all squandered away in bawbles, and new-fashioned trumpery.

Man. Oh! for ladies in London, Sir Francis, all this might be necessary.

Sir Fran. Noa, there's the plague on't; the devil o' one useful thing I do see for it, but two pair of laced shoes, and those stond me in three pounds three shillings a pair, too.

Man. Dear sir, this is nothing! Why we have city wives here, that while their good man is selling three pennyworth of sugar, will give you twenty pounds for a short apron.

Sir Fran. Mercy on us, what a mortal poor devil is a husband!

Man. Well, but I hope you have nothing else to complain of.

Sir Fran. Ah, would I could say so too!—but there's another hundred behind yet, that goes more to my heart than all that went before it.

Man. And how might that be disposed of?

Sir Fran. Troth, I am almost ashamed to tell you.

Man. Out with it.

Sir Fran. Why, she has been at an assembly.

Man. What, since I saw you! I thought you had all supped at home last night.

Sir Fran. Why, so we did—and all as merry as grigs—I'cod, my heart was so open, that I tossed another hundred into her apron, to get out early this morning with—But the cloth was sooner taken away, than in comes my Lady Townly here, (who, between you and I—mum—has had the devil to pay yonder) with another rantipole dame of quality, and out they must have her, they said, to introduce her to my Lady Noble's assembly, forthwith—A few words, you may be sure, made the

bargain—so, bawnce! and away they drive, as if the devil had got into the coach-box—so, about four or five in the morning—home comes madam, with her eyes a foot deep in her head—and my poor hundred pounds left behind her at the hazard-table.

Man. All lost at dice!

Sir Fran. Every shilling—among a parcel of pig-tail puppies, and pale-faced women of quality.

Man. But pray, Sir Francis, how came you, after you found her so ill an housewife of one sum, so soon to trust her with another?

Sir Fran. Why, truly, I mun say that was partly my own fault; for if I had not been a blab of my tongue, I believe that last hundred might have been saved.

Man. How so?

Sir Fran. Why, like an owl as I was, out of goodwill, forsooth, partly to keep her in humour, I must needs tell her of the thousand pounds a-year I had just got the promise of—I'cod, she lays her claws upon it that moment—said it was all owing to her advice, and truly she would have her share on't.

Man. What, before you had it yourself?

Sir Fran. Why, ay, that's what I told her—My dear, said I, mayhap I mayn't receive the first quarter on't this half year.

Man. Sir Francis, I have heard you with a great deal of patience, and I really feel compassion for you.

Sir Fran. Truly, and well you may, cousin; for I don't see that my wife's goodness is a bit the better for bringing to London.

Man. If you remember, I gave you a hint of it.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, it's true, you did so: but the devil himself could not have believed she would have rid post to him.

Man. Sir, if you stay but a fortnight in this town, you will every day see hundreds as fast upon the gallop as she is.

Sir Fran. Ah, this London is a base place indeed! —Waunds, if things should happen to go wrong with me at Westminster, at this rate, how the devil shall I keep out of a jail?

Man. Why, truly, there seems to me but one way to avoid it.

Sir Fran. Ah, would you could tell me that, cousin!

Man. The way lies plain before you, sir; the same road that brought you hither, will carry you safe home again.

Sir Fran. Ods-flesh, cousin! what! and leave a thousand pounds a-year behind me?

Man. Pooh, pooh! leave any thing behind you, but your family, and you are a saver by it.

Sir Fran. Ay, but consider, cousin, what a scurvy figure shall I make in the country, if I come down withawt it.

Man. You will make a much more lamentable figure in a jail without it.

Sir Fran. Mayhap 'at yow have no great opinion of it then, cousin?

Man. Sir Francis, to do you the service of a real friend, I must speak very plainly to you: you don't yet see half the ruin that's before you.

Sir Fran. Good-lack! how may you mean, cousin?

Man. In one word, your whole affairs stand thus—In a week you'll lose your seat at Westminster: in a fortnight my lady will run you into jail, by keeping the best company—In four-and-twenty hours your daughter will run away with a sharper, because she han't been used to better company: and your son will steal into marriage with a cast mistress, because he has not been used to any company at all.

Sir Fran. I' th' name o' goodness, why should you think all this?

Man. Because I have proof of it; in short, I know so much of their secrets, that if all this is not prevented to-night, it will be out of your power to do it to-morrow morning.

Sir Fran. Mercy upon us! you frighten me—Well, sir, I will be governed by you: but what am I to do in this case?

Man. I have not time here to give you proper instructions; but about eight this evening I'll call at your lodgings, and there you shall have full conviction how much I have it at heart to serve you.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, my lord desires to speak with you.

Man. I'll wait upon him.

Sir Fran. Well, then, I'll go strait home, naw.

Man. At eight depend upon me.

Sir Fran. Ah, dear cousin! I shall be bound to you as long as I live. Mercy deliver us, what a terrible journey have I made on't.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

Opens to a Dressing-room; Lady TOWNLY, as just up, walks to her Toilet, leaning on Mrs. TRUSTY.

Trust. Dear madam, what should make your ladyship so out of order?

Lady T. How is it possible to be well, where one is killed for want of sleep?

Trust. Dear me! it was so long before you rung, madam, I was in hopes your ladyship had been finely composed.

Lady T. Composed! why I have lain in an inn here; this house is worse than an inn with ten stage-coaches: what between my lord's impertinent people of business in a morning, and the intolerable thick shoes of footmen at noon, one has not a wink all night.

Trust. Indeed, madam, it's a great pity my lord can't be persuaded into the hours of people of quality—though I must say that, madam, your ladyship is certainly the best matrimonial manager in town.

Lady T. Oh, you are quite mistaken, Trusty! I manage very ill; for, notwithstanding all the power I have, by never being over-fond of my lord—

yet I want money infinitely oftener than he is willing to give it me.

Trusty. Ah! if his lordship could but be brought to play himself, madam, then he might feel what it is to want money.

Lady T. Oh, don't talk of it! do you know that I am undone, Trusty?

Trusty. Mercy forbid, madam!

Lady T. Broke, ruined, plundered!—stripped, even to a confiscation of my last guinea!

Trusty. You don't tell me so, madam?

Lady T. And where to raise ten pounds in the world—What is to be done, Trusty?

Trusty. Truly, I wish I were wise enough to tell you, madam: but may be your ladyship may have a run of better fortune upon some of the good company that comes here to-night.

Lady T. But I have not a single guinea to try my fortune.

Trusty. Ha! that's a bad business indeed, madam—Adad, I have a thought in my head, madam, if it is not too late—

Lady T. Out with it quickly, then, I beseech thee.

Trusty. Has not the steward something of fifty pounds, madam, that you left in his hands to pay somebody about this time?

Lady T. Oh, ay; I had forgot—'twas to—a—what's his filthy name?

Trusty. Now I remember, madam, 'twas to Mr. Lutestring, your old mercer, that your ladyship

turned off about a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

Lady T. The very wretch! If he has not paid it, run quickly, dear Trusty, and bid him bring it hither immediately—*[Exit Trusty.]* Well, sure mortal woman never had such fortune! five, five and nine, against poor seven for ever—No, after that horrid bar of my chance, that Lady Wronghead's fatal red fist upon the table, I saw it was impossible ever to win another stake—Sit up all night; lose all one's money; dream of winning thousands; wake without a shilling; and then—How like a hag I look!—In short—the pleasures of life are not worth this disorder. If it were not for shame, now, I could almost think Lady Grace's sober scheme not quite so ridiculous—If my wife lord could but hold his tongue for a week, 'tis odds but I should hate the town in a fortnight—But I will not be driven out of it, that's positive.

TRUSTY returns.

Trusty. Oh, madam, there's no bearing of it! Mr. Lutestring was just let in at the door, as I came to the stair foot; and the steward is now actually paying him the money in the hall.

Lady T. Run to the stair-case head again—and scream to him, that I must speak with him this instant.

[Trusty runs out and speaks.]

Trusty. Mr. Poundage—a-hem! Mr. Poundage, a word with you quickly.

[Without.]

Pound. *[Within.]* I'll come to you presently.

[Without.]

Trusty. Presently won't do, man, you must come this minute. *[Without.*

Pound. I am but just paying a little money here. *[Without.*

Trusty. Cods my life, paying money! Is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my lady this moment, quick! *[Without.*

TRUSTY returns.

Lady T. Will the monster come or no?—

Trusty. Yes, I hear him now, madam; he is hobbling up as fast as he can.

Lady T. Don't let him come in—for he will keep such a babbling about his accounts—my brain is not able to bear him.

[Poundage comes to the door, with a money-bag in his hand.

Trusty. Oh, it's well you are come, fir! where's the fifty pounds?

Pound. Why, here it is; if you had not been in such haste, I should have paid it by this time—the man's now writing a receipt, below, for it.

Trusty. No matter; my lady says you must not pay him with that money! there's not enough, it seems; there's a pistole, and a guinea, that is not good, in it—besides, there is a mistake in the account too—*[Twitches the bag from him.]* But she is not at leisure to examine it now: so you must bid Mr. What-d'ye-call-um call another time.

Lady T. What is all that noise there?

Pound. Why, and it please your ladyship——

Lady T. Pr'ythee, don't plague me now; but do as you were ordered.

Pound. Nay, what your ladyship pleases, madam. [Exit Poundage.]

Trusty. There they are, madam—[Pours the money out of the bag.]—The pretty things—were so near falling into a nasty tradesman's hand. I protest it made me tremble for them—I fancy your ladyship had as good give me that bad guinea, for luck's sake—thank you, madam. [Takes a guinea.]

Lady T. Why, I did not bid you take it.

Trusty. No; but your ladyship looked as if you were just going to bid me; and so I was willing to save you the trouble of speaking, madam.

Lady T. Well, thou hast deserved it; and so, for once—but hark! don't I hear the man making a noise yonder? Though, I think, now, we may compound for a little of his ill-humour——

Trusty. I'll listen.

Lady T. Pr'ythee do. [Trusty goes to the door.]

Trusty. Ay, they are at it, madam—he's in a bitter passion with poor Poundage—Bless me! I believe he'll beat him——Mercy on us, how the wretch swears!

Lady T. And a sober citizen too! that's a shame.

Trusty. Ha! I think all's silent of a sudden—may be the porter has knocked him down—I'll step and see—— [Exit Trusty.]

Lady T. These trades-people are the troublesomest creatures! No words will satisfy them.

[Trusty returns.]

Trusty. Oh, madam! undone, undone! My lord has just bolted out upon the man, and is hearing all his pitiful story over——If your ladyship pleases to come hither, you may hear him yourself.

Lady T. No matter; it will come round presently: I shall have it from my lord, without losing a word by the way, I'll warrant you.

Trusty. Oh, lud, madam! here's my lord just coming in.

Lady T. Do you get out of the way, then. [*Exit Trusty.*] I am afraid I want spirits; but he will soon give 'em me.

Enter Lord TOWNLY.

Lord T. How comes it, madam, that a tradesman dares be clamorous in my house, for money due to him from you?

Lady T. You don't expect, my lord, that I should answer for other people's impertinence.

Lord T. I expect, madam, you should answer for your own extravagancies, that are the occasion of it—I thought I had given you money three months ago, to satisfy all these sort of people.

Lady T. Yes; but you see they never are to be satisfied.

Lord T. Nor am I, madam, longer to be abused thus; what's become of the last five hundred I gave you?

Lady T. Gone!

Lord T. Gone! what way, madam?

Lady T. Half the town over, I believe, by this time.

Lord T. 'Tis well; I see ruin will make no impression, till it falls upon you.

Lady T. In short, my lord, if money is always the subject of our conversation, I shall make you no answer.

Lord T. Madam, madam, I will be heard, and make you answer.

Lady T. Make me! Then I must tell you, my lord, this is a language I have not been used to, and I won't bear it.

Lord T. Come, come, madam, you shall bear a great deal more, before I part with you.

Lady T. My lord, if you insult me, you will have as much to bear on your side, I can assure you.

Lord T. Pooh! your spirit grows ridiculous—you have neither honour, worth, nor innocence to support it.

Lady T. You'll find, at least, I have resentment; and do you look well to the provocation.

Lord T. After those you have given me, madam, 'tis almost infamous to talk with you.

Lady T. I scorn your imputation, and your menaces. The narrowness of your heart's your monitor; 'tis there, there, my lord, you are wounded; you have less to complain of than many husbands of an equal rank to you.

Lord T. Death, madam! do you presume upon your corporal merit, that your person's less tainted than your mind? Is it there, there alone, an honest husband can be injured? Have you not every other vice that can debase your birth, or stain the heart of woman? Is not your health, your beauty, husband,

fortune, family disclaimed, for nights consumed in riot and extravagance? The wanton does no more; if she conceals her shame, does less: and sure the dissolute avowed, as sorely wrongs my honour and my quiet.

Lady T. I see, my lord, what sort of wife might please you.

Lord T. Ungrateful woman! could you have seen yourself, you in yourself had seen her—I am amazed our legislature has left no precedent of a divorce, for this more visible injury, this adultery of the mind, as well as that of the person! When a woman's whole heart is alienated to pleasures I have no share in, what is it to me, whether a black ace, or a powdered coxcomb has possession of it.

Lady T. If you have not found it yet, my lord, that is not the way to get possession of mine, depend upon it.

Lord T. That, madam, I have long despaired of; and since our happiness cannot be mutual; 'tis fit that with our hearts, our persons too should separate.—This house you sleep no more in: though your content might grossly feed upon the dishonour of a husband; yet my desires would starve upon the features of a wife.

Lady T. Your style, my lord, is much of the same delicacy with your sentiments of honour.

Lord T. Madam, madam, this is no time for compliments—I have done with you.

Lady T. If we had never met, my lord, I had not broke my heart for it: but have a care, I may

not, perhaps, be so easily recalled as you may imagine.

Lord T. Recalled!—Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Desire my sister and Mr. Manly to walk up.

[*Exit Serv.*]

Lady T. My lord, you may proceed as you please; but pray, what indiscretions have I committed, that are not daily practised by a hundred other women of quality?

Lord T. 'Tis not the number of ill wives, madam, that makes the patience of a husband less contemptible: and though a bad one may the best man's lot, yet he'll make a better figure in the world, that keeps his misfortunes out of doors, than he that tamely keeps them within.

Lady T. I don't know what figure you may make, my lord; but I shall have no reason to be ashamed of mine, in whatever company I may meet you.

Lord T. Be sparing of your spirit, madam; you'll need it to support you.

Enter Lady GRACE and MANLY.

Mr. Manly, I have an act of friendship to beg of you, which wants more apologies than words can make for it.

Man. Then pray make none, my lord, that I may have the greater merit in obliging you.

Lord T. Sister, I have the same excuse to intreat of you, too.

Lady G. To your request, I beg, my lord.

Lord T. Thus then—As you both were present at my ill-considered marriage, I now desire you

each will be a witness of my determined separation——I know, fir, your good-nature, and my sister's, must be shocked at the office I imposed on you; but as I don't ask your justification of my cause, so I hope you are conscious——that an ill woman can't reproach you, if you are silent, on her side.

Man. My lord, I never thought, till now, it could be difficult to oblige you.

Lady G. [*Aside.*] Heavens, how I tremble!

Lord T. For you, my Lady Townly, I need not here repeat the provocations of my parting with you——the world, I fear, is too well informed of them——For the good lord, your dead father's sake, I will still support you as his daughter——As Lord Townly's wife, you have had every thing a fond husband could bestow, and (to our mutual shame I speak it) more than happy wives desire——But those indulgences must end; state, equipage, and splendor, but ill becomes the vices that misuse them——The decent necessaries of life shall be supplied——but not one article to luxury; not even the coach that waits to carry you from hence shall you ever use again. Your tender aunt, my Lady Lovemore, with tears, this morning, has consented to receive you; where, if time, and your condition, brings you to a due reflection, your allowance shall be increased——but if you are still lavish of your little, or pine for past licentious pleasures, that little shall be less: nor will I call that soul my friend that names you in my hearing.

Lady G. My heart bleeds for her.

[*Aside.*]

Lord T. Oh, Manly, look there! turn back thy thoughts with me, and witness to my growing love. There was a time, when I believed that form incapable of vice or of decay; there I propos'd the partner of an easy home; there I, for ever, hop'd to find a cheerful companion, an agreeable intimate, a faithful friend, a useful help-mate, and a tender mother—but, oh, how bitter now the disappointment!

Man. The world is different in its sense of happiness; offended as you are, I know you will still be just.

Lord T. Fear me not.

Man. This last reproach, I see, has struck her.

[*Aside.*

Lord T. No, let me not (though I this moment cast her from my heart for ever) let me not urge her punishment beyond her crimes—I know the world is fond of any tale that feeds its appetite of scandal: and as I am conscious severities of this kind seldom fail of imputations too gross to mention, I here, before you both, acquit her of the least suspicion rais'd against the honour of my bed. Therefore, when abroad her conduct may be questioned, do her fame that justice.

Lady T. Oh, sister!

[*Turns to Lady Grace, weeping.*

Lord T. When I am spoken of, where without favour this action may be canvass'd, relate but half my provocations, and give me up to censure. [*Going.*

Lady T. Support me! save me! hide me from the world!

[*Falling on Lady Grace's neck.*

Lord T. [*Returning.*—I had forgot me—You have no share in my resentment, therefore, as you have lived in friendship with her, your parting may admit of gentler terms than suit the honour of an injured husband. [*Offers to go out.*

Man. [*Interposing.*] My lord, you must not, shall not leave her thus! One moment's stay can do your cause no wrong! If looks can speak the anguish of her heart, I'll answer with my life, there's something labouring in her mind, that would you bear the hearing, might deserve it.

Lord T. Consider! since we no more can meet, press not my staying to insult her.

Lady T. Yet stay, my lord—the little I would say will not deserve an insult; and, undeserved, I know your nature gives it not. But as you've called in friends, to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply.

Lord T. I shan't refuse you that, madam—be it so.

Lady T. My lord, you ever have complain'd I wanted love; but as you kindly have allowed I never gave it to another; so, when you hear the story of my heart, though you may still complain, you will not wonder at my coldness.

Lady G. This promises a reverse of temper.

[*Apart.*

Man. This, my lord, you are concerned to hear.

Lord T. Proceed, I am attentive.

Lady T. Before I was your bride, my lord, the flattering world had talked me into beauty: which, at my glass, my youthful vanity confirmed. Wild

with that fame, I thought mankind my slaves, I triumphed over hearts, while all my pleasure was their pain : yet was my own so equally insensible to all, that when a father's firm commands enjoined me to make choice of one, I even there declined the liberty he gave, and to his own election yielded up my youth——his tender care, my lord, directed him to you——Our hands were joined ! But still my heart was wedded to its folly ! My only joy was power, command, society, profuseness, and to lead in pleasures ! The husband's right to rule I thought a vulgar law, which only the deformed or meanly-spirited obeyed ! I knew no directors, but my passions ; no master, but my will ! Even you, my lord, some time o'ercome by love, was pleased with my delights ; nor, then, foresaw this mad misuse of your indulgence——And, though I call myself ungrateful, while I own it, yet, as a truth it cannot be denied——that kind indulgence has undone me ; it added strength to my habitual failings, and in a heart thus warm, in wild unthinking life, no wonder if the gentler sense of love was lost.

Lord T. Oh, Manly ! where has this creature's heart been buried ?

[*Apart.*

Man. If yet recoverable——How vast the treasure !

[*Apart.*

Lady T. What I have said, my lord, is not my excuse, but my confession ; my errors (give 'em, if you please, a harder name) cannot be defended ! No ! What's in its nature wrong, no words can palliate, no plea can alter ! What then remains in my condition, but resignation to your pleasure ?

Time only can convince you of my future conduct: therefore, 'till I have lived an object of forgiveness, I dare not hope for pardon—The penance of a lonely contrite life were little to the innocent; but to have deserved this separation, will strow perpetual thorns upon my pillow.

Lady G. Oh, happy, heavenly hearing.

Lady T. Sister, farewell! [*Kissing her.*] Your virtue needs no warning from the shame that falls on me: but when you think I have atoned my follies past—persuade your injured brother to forgive them.

Lord T. No, madam! your errors thus renounced, this instant are forgotten! So deep, so due a sense of them, has made you, what my utmost wishes formed, and all my heart has sigh'd for.

Lady T. [*Turning to Lady Grace.*] How odious does this goodness make me!

Lady G. How amiable your thinking so!

Lord T. Long parted friends, that pass through easy voyages of life, receive but common gladness in their meeting: but from a shipwreck saved, we mingle tears with our embraces!

[*Embracing Lady Townly.*]

Lady T. What words! what love! what duty can repay such obligations!

Lord T. Preserve but this desire to please, your power is endless.

Lady T. Oh!—'till this moment, never did I know, my lord, I had a heart to give you.

Lord T. By Heaven! this yielding hand, when first it gave you to my wishes, presented not a treasure more desirable! Oh, Manly! sister! as you

have often shared in my disquiet, partake of my felicity ! my new-born joy, see here the bride of my desires ! This may be called my wedding-day.

Lady G. Sister, (for now, methinks, that name is dearer to my heart than ever) let me congratulate the happiness that opens to you.

Man. Long, long, and mutual may it flow——

Lord T. To make our happiness complete, my dear, join here with me to give a hand, that amply will repay the obligation.

Lady T. Sister, a day like this——

Lady G. Admits of no excuse against the general joy. [Gives her hand to Manly.]

Man. A joy like mine———despairs of words to speak it.

Lord T. Oh, Manly, how the name of friend endears the brother ! [Embracing him.]

Man. Your words, my lord, will warm me to deserve them.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My lord, the apartments are full of masqueraders——And some people of quality there desire to see your lordship and my lady.

Lady T. I thought, my lord, your orders had forbid their revelling ?

Lord T. No, my dear, Manly has desired their admittance to-night; it seems, upon a particular occasion——Say we will wait upon them instantly.

[Exit Servant.]

Lady T. I shall be but ill company to them.

Lord T. No matter : not to see them, would on a sudden be too particular. Lady Grace will assist you to entertain them.

Lady T. With her, my lord, I shall be always easy——Sister, to your unerring virtue I now commit the guidance of my future days——

*Never the paths of pleasure more to tread,
But where your guarded innocence shall lead ;
For in the marriage-state the world must own
Divided happiness was never known.
To make it mutual nature points the way :
Let husbands govern ; gentle wives obey. [Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

" Opening to another Apartment discovers a great number of people in masquerade, talking all together, and playing upon one another. Lady Wronghead as a shepherdess ; Jenny as a nun ; the 'Squire as a running footman ; and the Count in a domino. After some time Lord and Lady Townly, with Lady Grace, enter to them unmasked.

" Lord T. So ! here's a great deal of company.

" Lady T. A great many people, my lord, but no company——as you'll find——for here's one now that seems to have a mind to entertain us.

" [A Mask, after some affected gesture, makes up to Lady Townly.

" Mask. Well, dear Lady Townly, sha'n't we see you by-and-by ?

" *Lady T.* I don't know you, madam.

" *Mask.* Don't you seriously? [*In a squeaking tone.*]

" *Lady T.* Not I, indeed.

" *Mask.* Well, that's charming; but can't you
" guess?

" *Lady T.* Yes, I could guess wrong, I believe.

" *Mask.* That's what I'd have you do.

" *Lady T.* But, madam, if I don't know you at
" all, is not that as well?

" *Mask.* Ay, but you do know me.

" *Lady T.* Dear sister, take her off o' my hands;
" there's no bearing this. [*Apart.*]

" *Lady G.* I fancy I know you, madam.

" *Mask.* I fancy you don't; what makes you
" think you do?

" *Lady G.* Because I have heard you talk.

" *Mask.* Ay, but you don't know my voice, I'm
" sure.

" *Lady G.* There is something in your wit and
" humour, madam, so very much your own, it is
" impossible you can be any body but my Lady
" Trifle.

" *Mask.* [*Unmasking.*] Dear Lady Grace! thou
" art a charming creature.

" *Lady G.* Is there nobody else we know here?

" *Mask.* Oh dear, yes! I have found out fifty
" already.

" *Lady G.* Pray who are they?

" *Mask.* Oh, charming company! there's Lady
" Ramble——Lady Riot——Lady Kill-care——

" Lady Squander——Lady Strip——Lady Pawn
" ——and the Dutchess of Single Guinea.

" *Lord T.* Is it not hard, my dear, that people
" of sense and probity are sometimes forced to seem
" fond of such company? [*Apart.*

" *Lady T.* My lord it will always give me pain
" to remember their acquaintance, but none to drop
" it immediately. [*Apart.*

" *Lady G.* But you have given us no account of
" the men, madam. Are they good for any thing?

" *Mask.* Oh, yes, you must know, I always find
" out them by their endeavours to find out me.

" *Lady G.* Pray, who are they?

" *Mask.* Why, for your men of tip-top wit and
" pleasure, about town, there's my Lord—Bite—
" Lord Archwag—Young Brazen-wit—Lord Tim-
" berdown—Lord Joint-life—and——Lord Mort-
" gage. Then for your pretty fellows only—there's
" Sir Powder-Peacock——Lord Lapwing—Billy
" Magpie——Beau Frightful——Sir Paul Plaister-
" crown, and the Marquis of Monkey-man.

" *Lady G.* Right! and these are the fine gentle-
" men that never want elbow-room at an assembly.

" *Mask.* The rest, I suppose, by their tawdry
" hired habits, are tradesmen's wives, inns-of-court
" beaux, Jews, and kept mistresses.

" *Lord T.* An admirable collection!

" *Lady G.* Well, of all our public diversions, I
" am amazed how this, that is so very expensive,
" and has so little to shew for it, can draw so much
" company together.

" *Lord T.* Oh, if it were not expensive, the bet-
" ter fort would not come into it: and because me-

"ney can purchase a ticket, the common people
"scorn to be kept out of it.

"*Mask.* Right, my lord. Poor Lady Grace! I
"suppose you are under the same astonishment,
"that an opera should draw so much good company.

"*Lady G.* Not at all, madam: its an easier
"matter sure to gratify the ear, than the under-
"standing. But have you no notion, madam, of
"receiving pleasure and profit at the same time?

"*Mask.* Oh, quite none! unless it be sometimes
"winning a great stake; laying down a *vole*, *sans*
"*prendre*, may come up, to the profitable pleasure
"you were speaking of.

"*Lord T.* You seem attentive, my dear? [*Apart.*

"*Lady T.* I am, my lord; and amazed at my
"own follies, so strongly painted in another wo-
"man. [*Apart.*

"*Lady G.* But see, my lord, we had best adjourn
"our debate, I believe, for here are some masks
"that seem to have a mind to divert other people as
"well as themselves.

"*Lord T.* The least we can do is to give them a
"clear stage then.

"[*A dance of masks here in various characters.*
"This was a favour extraordinary.

Enter MANLY.

"Oh, Manly, I thought we had lost you.

"*Man.* I ask pardon, my lord: but I have been
"obliged to look a little after my country family.

"*Lord T.* Well, pray, what have you done with
"them?

Man. They are all in the house here, among the masks, my lord; if your lordship has curiosity enough to step into a lower apartment, in three minutes I'll give you an ample account of them.

Lord T. Oh, by all means: we'll wait upon you.

[The scene shuts upon the masks to a smaller apartment.]

MANLY re-enters with Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Fran. Well, cousin, you have made my very hair stand on end! Waunds! if what you tell me be true, I'll stuff my whole family into a stage-coach, and trundle them into the country again on Monday morning.

Man. Stick to that, sir, and we may yet find a way to redeem all. In the mean time, place yourself behind this screen, and for the truth of what I have told you, take the evidence of your own senses: but be sure you keep close till I give you the signal.

Sir Fran. Sir, I'll warrant you—Ah, my Lady! my Lady Wronghead! What a bitter business have you drawn me into.

Man. Hush! to your post; here comes one couple already.

[Sir Francis retires behind the screen. Exit Manly.]

Enter MYRTILLA with 'Squire RICHARD.

'Squ. Rich. What, is this the doctor's chamber?

Myr. Yes, yes, speak softly.

'Squ. Rich. Well, but where is he?

Myr. He'll be ready for us presently, but he says he can't do us the good turn without witnesses: so,

when the count and your sister come, you know he and you may be fathers for one another.

'*Squ. Rich.* Well, well, tit for tat! ay, ay, that will be friendly.

Myr. And see, here they come.

Enter Count BASSET, and Miss JENNY.

Count Bas. So, so, here's your brother and his bride, before us, my dear.

Jenny. Well, I vow, my heart's at my mouth still! I thought I should never have got rid of mamma; but while she stood gaping upon the dance, I gave her the slip! Lawd, do but feel how it beats here.

Count Bas. Oh, the pretty flutterer! I protest, my dear, you have put me into the same palpitation!

Jenny. Ay, say you so—but let's see now—Oh, lud! I vow it thumps purely—well, well, I see it will do, and so where's the parson?

Count Bas. Mrs. Myrtila, will you be so good as to see if the doctor's ready for us?

Myr. He only staid for you, sir: I'll fetch him immediately. [Exit.]

Jenny. Pray, sir, am I not to take place of mamma, when I'm a countess?

Count Bas. No doubt on't, my dear.

Jenny. Oh, lud! how her back will be up then, when she meets me at an assembly; or you and I in our coach-and-fix at Hyde-Park together!

Count Bas. Ay, or when she hears the box-keepers at an opera, call out—The countess of Basset's servants!

Jenny. Well, I say it, that will be delicious! And then, mayhap, to have a fine gentleman, with a star and a what-d'ye-call-um ribbon, lead me to my chair, with his hat under his arm all the way! Hold up, says the chairman; and so, says I, my lord, your humble servant. I suppose, madam, says he, we shall see you at my Lady Quadrille's? Ay, ay, to be sure, my lord, says I—So in swops me, with my hoop stuffed up to my forehead; and away they trot, swing! swing! with my tassels dangling, and my flambeaux blazing, and—Oh, it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality!

Count Bas. Well! I see that, plainly, my dear, there's ne'er a dutchess of 'em all will become an equipage like you.

Jenny. Well, well, do you find equipage, and I'll find airs, I warrant you.

“ SONG.

“ *What though they call me country lass,*

“ *I read it plainly in my glass,*

“ *That for a dutchess I might pass;*

“ *Oh, could I see the day!*

“ *Would fortune but attend my call,*

“ *At park, at play, at ring and ball,*

“ *I'd brave the proudest of them all,*

“ *With a stand by—clear the way.*

“ *Surrounded by a crowd of beaux,*

“ *With smart toupees, and powder'd clothes,*

“ *At rivals I'd turn up my nose;*

“ *Oh, could I see the day!*

" *I'd dart such glances from these eyes,*

" *Should make some lord or duke my prize :*

" *And then, oh, how I'd tyrannize,*

" *With a stand by——clear the way.*

" *Oh, then for ev'ry new delight,*

" *For equipage and diamonds bright,*

" *Quadrille, and plays, and balls all night ;*

" *Oh, could I see the day !*

" *Of love and joy I'd take my fill,*

" *The tedious hours of life to kill,*

" *In ev'ry thing I'd have my will,*

" *With a stand by——clear the way."*

'*Squ. Rich.* Troth ! I think this masquerading's the merriest game that ever I saw in my life ! Thof' in my mind, and there were but a little wrestling, or cudgel-playing naw, it would help it hugely. But what a-rope makes the parson stay so ?

Count Bas. Oh, here he comes, I believe.

Enter MYRTILLA, with a constable.

Const. Well, madam, pray which is the party that wants a spice of my office here ?

Myr. That's the gentleman.

[Pointing to the Count.

Count Bas. Hey-day ! what, in masquerade, doctor ?

Const. Doctor ! Sir, I believe you have mistaken your man : but if you are called Count Basser, I have a billet-doux in my hand for you, that will set you right presently.

Count Bas. What the devil's the meaning of all this?

Const. Only my Lord Chief Justice's warrant against you for forgery, sir.

Count Bas. Blood and thunder!

Const. And so, sir, if you please to pull off your fool's frock there, I'll wait upon you to the next justice of peace immediately.

Jenny. Oh, dear me, what's the matter?

[*Trembling.*

Count Bas. Oh, nothing, only a masquerading frolick, my dear.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, ho, is that all?

Sir Fran. No, firrah! that is not all?

[*Sir Francis coming softly behind the 'Squire, knocks him down with his cane.*

Enter MANLY.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, lawd! Oh, lawd! he has beaten my brains out.

Man. Hold, hold, Sir Francis, have a little mercy upon my poor godson, pray sir.

Sir Fran. Wounds, cousin, I ha'n't patience.

Count Bas. Manly! nay then I'm blown to the devil.

[*Aside.*

'Squ. Rich. Oh, my head! my head!

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD.

Lady Wrong. What's the matter here, gentlemen? For Heaven's sake! What, are you murdering my children?

Const. No, no, madam! no murder! only a little suspicion of felony, that's all.

Sir Fran. [*To Jenny.*] And for you, Mrs. Hot-
upon't, I could find in my heart to make you wear
that habit as long as you live, you jade you. Do
you know, huffy, that you were within two mi-
nutes of marrying a pickpocket.

Count Bas. So, so, all's out I find. [*Aside.*

Jenny. Oh, the mercy! why, pray, papa, is not
the count a man of quality then?

Sir Fran. Oh, yes, one of the unhang'd ones, it
seems.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*] Married! Oh, the con-
dent thing! There was his urgent business then—
slighted for her! I ha'n't patience!—and, for
ought I know, I have been all this while making
a friendship with a highwayman.

Man. Mr. Constable, secure there.

Sir Fran. Ah, my lady! my lady! this comes of
your journey to London: but now I'll have a fro-
lic of my own, madam; therefore pack up your
trumpery this very night, for the moment my horses
are able to crawl, you and your brats shall make
a journey into the country again.

Lady Wrong. Indeed, you are mistaken, Sir
Francis—I shall not stir out of town yet, I promise
you.

Sir Fran. Not stir? Waunds, madam—

Man. Hold, sir!—if you'll give me leave a little
—I fancy I shall prevail with my lady to think bet-
ter on't.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, you are a friend indeed!

Man. [*Apart to my lady.*] Look you, madam, as
to the favour you designed me, in sending this spu-

rious letter inclosed to my Lady Grace, all the revenge I have taken, is to have saved your son and daughter from ruin.—Now if you will take them fairly and quietly into the country again, I will save your ladyship from ruin.

Lady Wrong. What do you mean, sir?

Man. Why, Sir Francis—shall never know what is in this letter; look upon it. How it came into my hands you shall know at leisure.

Lady Wrong. Ha! my billet-doux to the count! and an appointment in it! I shall sink with confusion!

Man. What shall I say to Sir Francis, madam?

Lady Wrong. Dear sir, I am in such a trembling! preserve my honour, and I am all obedience.

[*Apart to Manly.*

Man. Sir Francis—my lady is ready to receive your commands for her journey, whenever you please to appoint it.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, I doubt I am obliged to you for it.

Man. Come, come, Sir Francis, take it as you find it. Obedience in a wife is a good thing, though it were never so wonderful!—And now, sir, we have nothing to do but to dispose of this gentleman.

Count Bas. Mr. Manly; sir, I hope you won't ruin me.

Man. Did you not forge this note for five hundred pounds, sir?

Count Bas. Sir—I see you know the world, and therefore I shall not pretend to prevaricate—But

it has hurt nobody yet, fir; I beg you will not stigmatize me; since you have spoiled my fortune in one family, I hope you won't be so cruel to a young fellow, as to put it out of my power, fir, to make it in another, fir.

Man. Look you, fir, I have not much time to waste with you: but if you expect mercy yourself, you must shew it to one you have been cruel to.

Count Baf. Cruel, fir!

Man. Have you not ruined this young woman?

Count Baf. I, fir!

Man. I know you have——therefore you can't blame her, if, in the fact you are charged with, she is a principal witness against you. However, you have one, and only one chance to get off with. Marry her this instant——and you take off her evidence.

Count Baf. Dear fir!

Man. No words, fir; a wife or a mittimus.

Count Baf. Lord, fir! this is the most unmerciful mercy!

Man. A private penance, or a public one——Constable.

Count Baf. Hold, fir, since you are pleased to give me my choice, I will not make so ill a compliment to the lady, as not to give her the preference.

Man. It must be done this minute, fir: the chaplain you expected is still within call.

Count Baf. Well, fir,——since it must be so——Come, spouse—I am not the first of the fraternity, that has run his head into one noose, to keep it out of another.

Myr. Come, fir, don't, repine: marriage is at worst but playing upon the square.

Count Bas. Ay, but the worst of the match too, is the devil.

Man. Well, fir, to let you see it is not so bad as you think it; as a reward for her honesty, in detecting your practices, instead of the forged bill you would have put upon her, there's a real one of five hundred pounds to begin a new honey-moon with.

[*Gives it to Myrtilla.*]

Count Bas. Sir, this is so generous an act——

Man. No compliments, dear fir——I am not at leisure now to receive them. Mr. Constable, will you be so good as to wait upon this gentleman into the next room, and give this lady in marriage to him?

Const. Sir, I'll do it faithfully.

Count Bas. Well, five hundred will serve to make a handsome push with, however.

[*Exeunt Count Bas. Myr. and Constable.*]

Sir Fran. And that I may be sure my family's rid of him for ever——come, my lady, let's even take our children along with us, and be all witness of the ceremony.

[*Exeunt Sir Fran. Lady Wrong. Miss and 'Squire.*]

Man. Now, my lord, you may enter.

Enter Lord and Lady TOWNLY, and Lady GRACE.

Lord T. So, fir, I give you joy of your negotiation.

Man. You overheard it all, I presume.

Lady G. From first to last, fir.

Lord T. Never were knaves and fools better disposed of.

Man. A sort of poetical justice, my lord, not much above the judgment of a modern comedy.

Lord T. To heighten that resemblance, I think, sister, there only wants your rewarding the hero of the fable, by naming the day of his happiness.

Lady G. This day, to-morrow, every hour, I hope, of life to come, will shew I want not inclination to complete it.

Man. Whatever I may want, madam, you will always find endeavours to deserve you.

Lord T. Then all are happy.

Lady T. Sister, I give you joy consummate as the happiest pair can boast.

In you, methinks, as in a glass, I see,

The happiness, that once advanc'd to me.

So visible the bliss, so plain the way,

How was it possible my sense could stray?

But now, a convert to this truth I come,

That married happiness is never found from home.

[Exeunt omnes.]

EPILOGUE.

METHINKS I hear some powder'd criticks say ;
" Damn it, this wise reform'd has spoil'd the play !
" The coxcomb should have drawn her more in fashion,
" Have gratified her softer inclination,
" Have tipped her a gallant, and clinch'd the provocation."
But there our bard stopp'd short : for 'twere uncivil
T' have a modern belle, all o'er a devil !
He hop'd, in honour of the sex, the age
Would bear one mended woman——on the stage.

From whence, you see, by common sense's rules,
Wives might be govern'd, were not husbands fools.
Whate'er by nature dames are prone to do,
They seldom stray but when they govern you.
When the wild wife perceives her deary tame,
No wonder then she plays him all the game.
But men of sense meet rarely that disaster ;
Women take pride where merit is their master :
Nay, she that with a weak man wisely lives,
Will seem t' obey the due commands he gives !
Happy obedience is no more a wonder,
When men are men, and keep them kindly under.
But modern consorts are such high bred creatures,
They think a husband's power degrades their features :
That nothing more proclaims a reigning beauty,
Than that she never was reproach'd with duty :
And that the greatest blessing Heav'n e'er sent,
Is in a spouse, incurious and content.



*To give such dames a diff'rent cast of thought,
By calling home the mind, these scenes were wrought.
If with a hand too rude the task is done,
We hope the scheme, by Lady Grace laid down,
Will all such freedom with the sex atone,
That virtue there unsoil'd, by modish art.
Throws out attractions for a Manly's heart.*

*You, you, then, ladies, whose unquestion'd lives
Give you the foremost fame of happy wives,
Protect, for its attempt, this helpless play;
Nor leave it to the vulgar taste a prey;
Appear the frequent champions of its cause,
Direct the crowd, and give yourselves applause.*





Act I.

ALL IN THE WRONG.

Scene I.



De Wilde pinxit

S. Clayton fecit

M^{rs} MATTOCKS as LADY RESTLESS.

This is really a handsome picture: what a charming countenance!

Dublin Published by Will^m Jones; N^o 86 Dame Street.



any del.

S. Clayton sculp.

Dublin Published by Will.^m Jones N^o 86 Dame Street.



ALL IN THE WRONG.

COMEDY,

By ARTHUR MURPHY, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRES-ROYAL,
DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

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WILLIAM POWERS.

PROLOGUE.

Written and spoken by SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

*TO-NIGHT, be it known to box, gall'ry, and pit,
Will be open'd the best † summer-warehouse for wit;
The new manufacture, Foote and Co. undertakers;
Play, pantomime, opera, farce—by the makers!
We scorn, like our brethren, our fortunes to owe
To Shakespere and Southern, to Otway and Rowe.
Though our judgment may err, yet our justice is shewn,
For we promise to mangle no works but our own.
And moreover on this you may firmly rely,
If we can't make you laugh, that we won't make you cry.
For Roscius, who knew we were mirth-loving souls,
Has lock'd up his lightning, his daggers, and bows.
Resolv'd that in buskins no hero shall stalk,
He has shut us quite out of the tragedy walk.
No blood, no blank-verse!—and in short we're undone,
Unless you're contented with frolic and fun.*

*If tir'd of her round in the Ranelagh-mill,
There should be but one female inclin'd to sit still;
If blind to the beauties, or sick of the squall,
A party should shun to catch cold at Vauxhall;*

† Mr. GARRICK, at this time, had let his playhouse for the summer season.

*If at Sadler's sweet Wells the made wine should be thick,
 The cheese-cakes turn sour, or Miss Wilkinson sick ;
 If the fume of the pipes should oppress you in June,
 Or the tumblers be lame, or the bells out of tune ;
 I hope you will call at our warehouse in Drury ;
 We've a curious assortment of goods, I assure you ;
 Domestic and foreign, and all kinds of wares ;
 English cloths, Irish linen, and French petenlairs !*

*If for want of good custom, or losses in trade,
 The poetical partners should bankrupts be made :
 If from dealings too large, we plunge deeply in debt,
 And WHEREAS issue out in the Muses' Gazette ;
 We'll on you our assigns for CERTIFICATES call ;
 Though insolvent, we're honest, and give up our all.*

ck,
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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

Sir JOHN RESTLESS,	-	-	-	Mr. Wroughton.
BEVERLEY,	-	-	-	Mr. Kemble.
Sir WILLIAM BELLMONT,	-	-	-	Mr. Phillimore.
Young BELLMONT,	-	-	-	Mr. Barrymore.
BLANDFORD,	-	-	-	Mr. Packer.
ROBERT, <i>servant to Sir John,</i>	-	-	-	Mr. Waldron.
BRUSH, <i>servant to Beverley,</i>	-	-	-	Mr. Burton.

Women.

Lady RESTLESS,	-	-	-	Mrs. Ward.
BELINDA,	-	-	-	Miss Farren.
CLARISSA,	-	-	-	Miss Collins.
TATTLE,	-	-	-	Mrs. Wilton.
TIPPET,	-	-	-	Miss Barnes.
MARMALET,	-	-	-	Miss Tidswell.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

Sir JOHN RESTLESS,	-	-	-	Mr. Ryder.
BEVERLEY,	-	-	-	Mr. Lewis.
Sir WILLIAM BELLMONT,	-	-	-	Mr. Thompson.
Young BELLMONT,	-	-	-	Mr. Davies.
BLANDFORD,	-	-	-	Mr. Fearon.
ROBERT, <i>servant to Sir John,</i>	-	-	-	Mr. Booth.
BRUSH, <i>servant to Beverley,</i>	-	-	-	Mr. Wewitzer.

Women.

Lady RESTLESS,	-	-	-	Mrs. Mattocks.
BELINDA,	-	-	-	Mrs. Pope.
CLARISSA,	-	-	-	Mrs. Mountain.
TATTLE,	-	-	-	Mrs. Davenett.
TIPPET,	-	-	-	Miss Platt.
MARMALET,	-	-	-	Miss Stuart.

ALL IN THE WRONG.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Park. Enter Sir JOHN RESTLESS and ROBERT, from a House in the Side-Scene.

Sir John.

SIR John Restless! Sir John Restless! thou hast played the fool with a vengeance. What devil whispered thee to marry such a woman?—Robert, you have been a faithful servant, and I value you. Did your lady go out at this door here into the Park, or did she go out at the street-door?

Rob. This door, sir.

Sir John. Robert, I will never live in a house again that has two doors to it.

Rob. Sir!

Sir John. I will give warning to my landlord instantly. The eyes of Argus are not sufficient to watch the motions of a wife, where there is a street-door, and a back-door, to favour her escapes.

Rob. Upon my word, sir, I wish—you will pardon my boldness, sir,—I wish you would shake off this uneasiness that preys upon your spirits. It grieves me to the heart,—it does, indeed, sir, to see you in this way: banish your suspicions: you have

conceived some strange aversion, I am afraid, to my lady, sir.

Sir John. No, Robert; no aversion: in spite of me I dote upon her still.

Rob. Then why will you not think generously, sir, of the person you love? My lady, I dare be sworn—

Sir John. Is false to me. That embitters my whole life. I love her, and she repays me with ingratitude, with perfidy, with falsehood, with—

Rob. I dare be sworn, sir, she is a woman of honour.

Sir John. Robert, I have considered you as a friend in my house: don't you betray me too: don't attempt to justify her.

Rob. Dear sir, if you will but give me leave: you have been an indulgent master to me, and I am only concerned for your welfare. You married my lady for love, and I have heard you so warm in her praise: why will you go back from those sentiments?

Sir John. Yes, I married her for love—Oh! love! love! what mischief dost thou not occasion in this world? Yes, Robert, I married her for love. When first I saw her, I was not so much struck with her beauty, as with that air of an ingenuous mind that appeared in her countenance; her features did not so much charm me with their symmetry, as that expression of sweetness, that smile that indicated affability, modesty, and compliance. But, honest Robert, I was deceived: I was not a month married, when I saw her practising those very smiles at her glass: I saw through the artifice; plainly saw there was nothing natural in her manner, but all forced,

all studied, put on with her head-dress: I was alarmed; I resolved to watch her from that moment, and I have seen such things!

Rob. Upon my word, sir, I believe you wrong her, and wrong yourself: you build on groundless surmises; you make yourself unhappy, and my lady too; and by being constantly uneasy, and never shewing her the least love, you'll forgive me, sir,—you fill her mind with strange suspicions, and so the mischief is done.

Sir John. Suspicions, Robert?

Rob. Yes, sir, strange suspicions!—My lady finds herself treated with no degree of tenderness; she infers that your inclinations are fixed elsewhere, and so she is become—you will pardon my blunt honesty—she is become downright jealous,—as jealous as yourself, sir.

Sir John. Oh! Robert, you are little read in the arts of women; you little know the intricacies of their conduct; the mazes through which they walk, shifting, turning, winding, running into devious paths, but tending all through a labyrinth to the temple of Venus. You cannot see, that all her pretences to suspect me of infidelity are merely a counter-plot to cover her own loose designs: it is but a gauze covering, though; it is seen through, and only serves to shew her guilt the more.

Rob. Upon my word, Sir John, I cannot see—

Sir John. No, Robert; I know you can't. Her suspicions of me all make against her; they are female stratagems, and yet it is but too true that she still is near my heart. Oh! Robert, Robert, when I have watched her at a play, or elsewhere; when I

have counted her oglings, and her whisperings, her stolen glances, and her artful leer, with the cunning of her sex, she has pretended to be as watchful of me: dissembling, false, deceitful woman!

Rob. And yet, I dare assure you——

Sir John. No more; I am not to be deceived; I know her thoroughly, and now,—now—has not she escaped out of my house, even now?

Rob. But with no bad design.

Sir John. I am the best judge of that: which way did she go?

Rob. Across the Park, sir; that way towards the Horse Guards.

Sir John. Towards the Horse Guards!—there, —there,—there, the thing is evident: you may go in, Robert.

Rob. Indeed, sir, I——

Sir John. Go in, I say; go in.

Rob. There is no persuading him to his own good. [Exit.]

Sir John. [Alone.] Gone towards the Horse Guards! my head aches; my forehead burns; I am cutting my horns. Gone towards the Horse Guards!—I'll pursue her thither; if I find her, the time, the place, all will inform against her. Sir John! Sir John; you were a madman to marry such a woman. [Exit.]

Enter BEVERLEY and BELLMONT, at opposite Sides.

Bev. Ha! my dear Bellmont? a fellow sufferer in love is a companion well met.

Bel. Beverley, I rejoice to see you.

Bev. Well! I suppose the same cause has brought us both into the Park: both come to fight our amo-

rous vows in the friendly gloom of yonder walk. Belinda keeps a perpetual war of love and grief, and hope and fear in my heart: and let me see— [*Lays his hand on Bellmont's breast.*] how fares all here? I fancy my sister is a little busy with you.

Bel. Busy! she makes a perfect riot there. Not one wink the whole night. Oh! Clarissa, her form so animated! her eyes so——

Bev. Pr'ythee! truce: I have not leisure to attend to her praise: a sister's praise too! the greatest merit I ever could see in Clarissa is, that she loves you freely and sincerely.

Bel. And to be even with you, sir, your Belinda! upon my soul, notwithstanding all your lavish praises, her highest perfection, in my mind, is her sensibility to the merit of my friend.

Bev. Oh! Bellmont! such a girl!

Scarce can I to Heav'n excuse
The devotion which I use
Unto that adored dame!

But tell me honestly now, do you think she has ever betrayed the least regard for me?

Bel. How can you, who have such convincing proofs, how can you ask such a question? That uneasiness of your's, that inquietude of mind——

Bev. Pr'ythee don't fix that character upon me.

Bel. It is your character, my dear Beverley: instead of enjoying the object before you, you are ever looking back to something past, or conjecturing about something to come, and are your own self-tormentor.

Bev. No, no, no ; don't be so severe ; I hate the very notion of such a temper : the thing is, when a man loves tenderly as I do, solicitude and anxiety are natural ; and when Belinda's father opposes my warmest wishes——

Bel. Why yes, the good Mr. Blandford is willing to give her in marriage to me.

Bev. The senseless old dotard !

Bel. Thank you for the compliment ! and my father, the wise Sir William Bellmont——

Bev. Is a tyrannical, positive, headstrong——

Bel. There again I thank you. But in short the old couple, Belinda's father and mine, have both agreed upon the match. They insist upon compliance from their children ; so that, according to their wise heads, I am to be married off-hand to Belinda, and you and your sister, poor Clarissa, are to be left to shift for yourselves.

Bev. Racks and torments !

Bel. Racks and torments !—Seas of milk and ships of amber, man !—We are sailing to our wished for harbour, in spite of their machinations. I have settled the whole affair with Clarissa.

Bev. Have you ?

Bel. I have, and to-morrow morning makes me possessor of her charms.

Bev. My dear boy, give us your hand : and then, thou dear rogue, and then Belinda's mine ! Loll-toll-loll.

Bel. Well, may you be in raptures, sir ; for here, here, here they both come.

Enter BELINDA, and CLARISSA.

Bev. Grace was in all her steps; heav'n in her eye; in every gesture dignity and love.—

Belin. A poetical reception truly!—But can't your passion inspire you to a composition of your own, Mr. Beverley?

Bev. It inspires me with sentiments, madam, which I can't find words to express. Suckling, Waller, Landfdown, and all our dealers in love-verses, give but a faint image of a heart touched like mine.

Belin. Poor gentleman! what a terrible taking you are in! But if the sonneteers cannot give an image of you, sir, have you had recourse to a painter, as you promised me?

Bev. I have, Belinda, and here,—here is the humble portrait of your adorer.

Belin. [*Takes the picture.*] Well! there is a likeness; but after all, there is a better painter than this gentleman, whoever he be.

Bev. A better!—now she is discontented. [*Aside.*] Where, madam, can a better be found?—If money can purchase him—

Belin. Oh! sir, when he draws for money he never succeeds. But when pure inclination prompts him, then his colouring is warm indeed. He gives a portrait that endears the original.—

Bev. Such an artist is worth the Indies!

Belin. You need not go so far to seek him: he has done your business already. The limner I mean is a certain little blind god, called Love, and he has stamped such an impression of you here—

Bev. Madam, your most obedient; and I can tell you, that the very same gentleman has been at work for you too.—

Bel. [*Who had been talking apart with Clarissa.*] Oh! he has had a world of business upon his hands, for we two have been agreeing what havock he has made with us.

Gla. Yes, but we are but in a kind of fool's paradise here: all our schemes are but mere castle-building, which your father, Mr. Bellmont, and my dear Belinda,—yours too are most obstinately determined to destroy.

Bel. Why, as you say, they are determined that I shall have the honour of Belinda's hand in the country-dance of matrimony.

Belin. Without considering that I may like another partner better.

Bev. And without considering that I, forlorn as I am, and my sister, there—who is as well inclined to a matrimonial game of romps as any girl in Christendom, must both of us sit down, and bind our brows with willow, in spite of our strongest inclinations to mingle in the group.

Bel. But we have planned our own happiness, and with a little resolution we shall be successful in the end, I warrant you. Clarissa, let us take a turn this way, and leave that love-sick pair to themselves: they are only fit company for each other, and we may find wherewithal to entertain ourselves.

Gla. Let us try: turn this way.

Belin. Are you going to leave us, Clarissa?

Gla. Only just sauntering into this side-walk: we sha'n't lose one another.

Belin. You are such a tender couple! you are not tired I see of saying pretty soft things to each other. Well, well! take your own way.

Cla. And if I guess right, you are glad to be left together.

Belin. Who, I?

Cla. Yes, you; the coy Belinda!

Belin. Not I truly; let us walk together.

Cla. No, no, by no means: you shall be indulged. Adieu!—we shall be within call.

[*Exit Bel. and Cla.*]

Bev. My sister is generously in love with Bellmont: I wish Belinda would act as openly towards me.

[*Aside.*]

Belin. Well, fir!—Thoughtful! I'll call Mr. Bellmont back, if that is the case.

Bev. She will call him back.

[*Aside.*]

Belin. Am I to entertain you, or you me?

Bev. Madam!

Belin. Madam!—ha, ha! why, you look as if you were frightened: are you afraid of being left alone with me?

Bev. Oh! Belinda, you know that is the happiness of my life;—but——

Belin. But what, fir?

Bev. Have I done any thing to offend you?

Belin. To offend me?

Bev. I should have been of the party last night; I own I should; it was a sufficient inducement to me that you was to be there; it was my fault, and you, I see, are piqued at it.

Belin. I piqued!

Bev. I see you are; and the company perceived it last night. I have heard it all: in mere repentment you directed all your discourse to Mr. Bellmont.

Belin. If I did, it was merely accidental.

Bev. No, it was deliberately done: forgive my rash folly in refusing the invitation: I meant no manner of harm.

Belin. Who imagines you did, sir?——

Bev. I beg your pardon, Belinda: you take offence too lightly.

Belin. Ha, ha! what have you taken into your head now? This uneasiness is of your own making: I have taken nothing ill, sir.

Bev. You could not but take it ill; but by all that's amiable about you, I meant not to incur your displeasure; forgive that abrupt answer I sent: I should have made a handsomer apology.

Belin. Apology!—you was engaged, was not you?

Bev. I said so; I own it, and beg your pardon—

Belin. Beg my pardon! for what? Ha, ha!

Bev. I only meant——

Belin. Ha, ha! can you think I see any thing in your message to be offended at, sir?

Bev. I was wrong: I beg your pardon. Where you were concerned, I own I should have expressed myself with more delicacy, than those hasty words, I am engaged, and can't wait upon you to-night. I should have told you that my heart was with you, though necessity dragged me another way: this omission you resented. I could learn, since, what spirits you were in the whole evening, though I enjoyed nothing in your absence. I could hear the

fallies of your wit, the sprightliness of your conversation, and on whom your eyes were fixed the whole night.

Belin. They were fixed upon Mr. Bellmont, you think!

Bev. Ay! and fixed with delight upon him, negotiating the business of love before the whole company.

Belin. Upon my word, sir, whoever is your author, you are misinformed. You alarm me with these fancies, and you know I have often told you that you are of too refining a temper: you create for yourself imaginary misunderstandings, and then are ever entering into explanations. But this watching for intelligence, from the spies and misrepresenters of conversation, betrays strong symptoms of jealousy. I would not be married to a jealous man for the world.

Bev. Now she's seeking occasion to break off.
[*Aside.*] Jealousy, ma'am, can never get admission into my breast. I am of too generous a temper: a certain delicacy I own I have; I value the opinion of my friends, and when there are circumstances of a doubtful aspect, I am glad to set things in their true light. And if I do so with others, surely with you, on whom my happiness depends, to desire a favourable interpretation of my words and actions cannot be improper.

Belin. But these little humours may grow up, and gather into the fixed disease of jealousy at last.
[*Lady Restless crosses the stage, and rings a bell at the door.*] And there now,—there goes a lady who is a victim to her own fretful imagination.

Bev. Who is the lady, pray?

Belin. My lady Restless. Walk this way, and I will give you her whole character. I am not acquainted with her ladyship, but I have heard much of her. This way. [*Exit Belinda and Beverley.*]

Lady Rest. [*Ring at the door.*] What do these servants mean? There is something going forward here. I will be let in, or I will know the reason why. [*Rings again.*] But in the mean time, Sir John can let any body he pleases out at the street-door: I'll run up the steps here, and observe. [*Exit.*]

TATTLE opens the door, MARMALET follows her.

Tat. Who rung this bell?—I don't see any body; and yet I am sure the bell rung. Well, Mrs. Marmalet, you will be going, I see.

Mar. Yes, Mrs. Tattle; I am obliged to leave you. I'll step across the Park, and I shall soon reach Grosvenor-Square. When shall I see you at our house?

Tat. Heaven knows when I shall be able to get out: my lady leads us all such lives! I wish I had such another place as you have of it.

Mar. I have nothing to complain of.

Tat. No, that you have not: when shall I get such a gown as that you have on by my lady? She will never fling off such a thing, and give it to a poor servant. Worry, worry, worry herself, and every body else too.

Re-enter Lady RESTLESS.

Lady Rest. No; there is nobody stirring that way. What do I see? A huffey coming out of my house!

Mar. Well, I must be gone, Mrs. Tattle: fare you well.

Lady Rest. She is dizen'd out too! why did not you open the door, Tattle, when I rung?

Tat. I came as soon as possible, madam.

Lady Rest. Who have you with you here? What is your business, mistress? [To Marmalet.

Mar. My business, madam?

Lady Rest. In confusion too! The case is plain. You come here after Sir John, I suppose.

Mar. I come after Sir John, madam?

Lady Rest. Guilt in her face! Yes, after Sir John: and, Tattle, you were in the plot against me; you were favouring her escape, were you?

Tat. I favour her escape, madam? What occasion for that? This is Mrs. Marmalet, madam; an acquaintance of mine, madam; as good a kind of body as any at all.

Lady Rest. Oh! very fine, mistress! you bring your creatures after the vile man, do you?

Mar. I assure you, madam, I am a very honest girl.

Lady Rest. Oh! I dare say so. Where did you get that gown?

Mar. La, ma'am! I came by it honestly; my Lady Conquest gave it to me. I live with my Lady Conquest, madam.

Lady Rest. What a complexion she has! How long have you lived in London?

Mar. Three years, madam.

Lady Rest. In London three years with that complexion! it can't be: perhaps she is painted: all these creatures paint. You are all so many painted

dolls. [*Rubs her face with a white handkerchief.*] No, it does not come off. So, Mrs. Tattle, you bring your fresh country girls here to my house, do you?

Tat. Upon my credit, ma'am—

Lady Rest. Don't tell me: I see through this affair. Go you about your business, mistress, and let me never see you about my doors again: go, go your ways.

Mar. Lord, ma'am, I shan't trouble your house. Mrs. Tattle, a good day. Here's a deal to do, indeed! I have as good a house as hers to go to, whatever she may think of herself. [*Exit.*]

Lady Rest. There, there, there; see there; she goes off in a huff! the way with them all. Ay! I see how it is, Tattle: you false, ungrateful—that gown was never given her by a woman, she had that from Sir John. Where is Sir John?

Tat. Sir John an't at home, ma'am.

Lady Rest. Where is he? Where is he gone?—When did he go out?

Tat. I really don't know, ma'am.

Lady Rest. Tattle, I know you fib now. But I'll sift this to the bottom. I'll write to my Lady Conquest to know the truth about that girl that was here but now.

Tat. You will find I told you truth, madam.

Lady Rest. Very well, Mrs. Pert. I'll go and write this moment. Send Robert, to give me an account of his master. Sir John, Sir John, you will distract me. [*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter BELINDA and BEVERLEY.

Belin. Ay! but that quickness, that extreme sensibility is what I am afraid of. I positively would not have a jealous husband for the world.

Bev. By heaven no earthly circumstance shall ever make me think injuriously of you. Jealousy! —ha, ha!—it is the most ridiculous passion!—ha, ha!

Belin. You may laugh, sir; but I know your over-refining temper too well, and I absolutely will have it in our marriage articles, that I must not be plagued with your suspicions.

Bev. I subscribe, ma'am.

Belin. I will have no enquiries where I am going to visit: no following me from place to place: and if we should chance to meet, and you should perceive a man of wit, or a pretty fellow, speaking to me, I will not have you fidgetting about on your chair, knitting your brow, and looking at your watch—'My dear, is it not time to go home?—my love, the coach is waiting:—and then, if you are prevailed upon to stay, I will not have you converse with a 'Yes, sir,' and a 'No, sir,' for the rest of the evening, and then wrangle with me in the carriage all the way home, and not be commonly civil to me for the rest of the night. I positively will have none of this.

Bev. Agreed, ma'am, agreed——

Belin. And you shan't tell me you are going out of town, and then steal privately to the play, or to Ranelagh, merely to be a spy upon me. I positively will admit no curiosity about my letters. If you

were to open a letter of mine, I should never forgive you. I do verily believe, if you were to open my letters I should hate you.

Bev. I subscribe to every thing you can ask. You shall have what female friends you please; lose your money to whom you please; dance with what beau you please; ride out with whom you please; go to what china-shop you please; and, in short, do what you please, without my attempting to bribe your footman or your maid for secret intelligence.

Belin. Oh, lud! Oh, lud! that is in the very strain of jealousy. Deliver me! there is my father yonder, and Sir William Bellmont with him. Fly this instant, fly, Mr. Beverley, down that walk; any where.

Bev. You promise then——

Belin. Don't talk to me now: what would you be at? I am yours, and only yours, unalterably so. Fly, begone, leave me this moment.

Bev. I obey: I am gone. *[Exit.]*

Belin. Now they are putting their wise heads together to thwart all my schemes of happiness: but love, imperious love, will have it otherwise.

Enter Mr. BLANDFORD and Sir WILLIAM BELL-MONT.

Bland. Sir William, since we have agreed upon every thing——

Sir Will. Why yes, Mr. Blandford, I think every thing is settled.

Bland. Why then we have only to acquaint the young people with our intentions, and so conclude the affair without delay.

Sir Will. That is all, fir.

Bland. As to my girl, I don't mind her nonsense about Beverley : she must do as I will have her.

Sir Will. And my son too, he must follow my directions. As to his telling me of his love for Clarissa, it is all a joke with me. Children must do as their parents will have them.

Bland. Ay, so they must ; and so they shall. Hey ! Here is my daughter. So, Belinda !—Well, my girl, Sir William and I have agreed, and you are to prepare for marriage, that's all.

Belin. With Mr. Beverley, fir ?

Bland. Mr. Beverley !

Belin. You know you encouraged him yourself, fir.

Bland. Well, well ! I have changed my mind on that head : my friend, Sir William, here offers you his son. Do as I advise you : have a care, Belinda, how you disobey my commands.

Belin. But, fir—

Bland. But, madam, I must and will be obeyed. You don't like him, you say : but I like him, and that's sufficient for you.

Sir Will. And so it is, Mr. Blandford. If my son pretended to have a will of his own, I should let him know to the contrary.

Belin. And can you, Sir William, against our inclination force us both ?

Bland. Hold your tongue, Belinda ; don't provoke me. What makes you from home ? Go your ways back directly, and settle your mind. I tell you once for all I will have my own way. Come, Sir William, we will step to the lawyer's chambers. Go home, Belinda, and be observant of my com-

mands. Come, Sir William. What did you say?
[To Belinda.] You mutiny, do you? Don't provoke me. You know, Belinda, I am an odd sort of man when provoked. Look ye here: mind what I say; I won't reason with you about the matter; my power is absolute, and if you offer to rebel, you shall have no husband at all with my consent. I'll cut you off with a shilling; I'll see you starve; beg an alms; live miserable; die wretched; in short, suffer any calamity without the least compassion from me. If I find you an undutiful girl, I cast you off for ever. So there's one word for all.

[Exit: Sir William follows him.]

Belin. What will become of me?—his inhumanity overcomes me quite—I can never consent: the very sight of this picture is enough to forbid it. Oh! Beverley, you are master of my heart. I'll go this instant—and—heavens! I can scarce move. I am ready to faint.

Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir John. No tidings of her far or near.

Belin. How I tremble!—I shall fall—no help?

Sir John. What do I see!—a young lady in distress?

Belin. Oh! [Faints in his arms, and drops the picture.]

Sir John. She is fallen into a fit. Would my servants were in the way.

Lady RESTLESS. At her window.

Lady Rest. Where can this barbarous man be gone to?—How!—under my very window!

Sir John. How cold she is!—quite cold—

[*Lays his hand to her cheek.*]

Lady Rest. How familiar he is with her!

Sir John. And yet she looks beautiful still.

Lady Rest. Does she so?

Sir John. Her eyes open—how lovely they look!

Lady Rest. Traitor!

Sir John. Her cheek begins to colour. Well, young lady, how fare you now, my dear?

Lady Rest. My dear too!

Belin. Heavens! where am I?—

Sir John. Repose yourself awhile, or will you step into my house?

Lady Rest. No, truly, sha'n't she. Vile man! but I will spoil your sport. I will come down to you directly, and flash confusion in your face.

[*Exit from above.*]

Sir John. Where do you live, madam?

Belin. In Queen's-square, sir, by the side of the Park.

Sir John. I will wait upon you: trust yourself with me. You look much better now. Lean on my arm. There, there, I will conduct you.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Lady RESTLESS.

Lady Rest. Now I'll make one among ye. How! fled! gone! which way? Is not that he, yonder?—No—he went into my house, I dare say, as I came down stairs. Tattle, Tattle, Robert. Will nobody answer?

Enter TATTLE.

Lady Rest. Where is Sir John?

Tat. La! ma'am, how should I know?

Lady Rest. Did not he go in this moment?

Tat. No, ma'am.

Lady Rest. To be sure you'll say so. I'll follow him through the world, or I'll find him out. So, so,—what is here?—This is her picture, I suppose. I will make sure of this at least: this will discover her to me, tho' she has escaped now. Cruel, false, deceitful man! *[Exit.*

Tat. Poor lady! I believe her head is turned, for my part. Well! I am determined I'll look out for another place, that's a sure thing I will. *[Exit.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Sir JOHN's House. Enter Sir JOHN and ROBERT.

Sir John.

ROBERT, where is your lady?

Rob. In her own room, fir.

Sir John. Any body with her?

Rob. I can't say, fir: my lady is not well.

Sir John. Not well! fatigued with rioting about this town, I suppose. How long has she been at home?

Rob. About an hour, fir.

Sir John. About an hour!—very well, Robert, you may retire. *[Exit Robert.]* Now will I question her closely. So—so—so—she comes, leaning

on her maid: finely dissembled! finely dissembled!
But this pretended illness shall not shelter her from
my strict enquiry. Soft a moment! If I could over-
hear what passes between 'em, it might lead to the
truth. I'll work by stratagem. The hypocrite!
how she acts her part! [Exit.

Enter Lady RESTLESS and TATTLE.

Tat. How are you now, madam?

Lady Rest. Somewhat better, Tattle. Reach that
chair. Tattle, tell me honestly, does that girl live
with Lady Conquest?

Tat. She does, madam, upon my veracity.

Lady Rest. Very well! you will be obstinate, I
see, but I shall know the truth presently. I shall
have an answer from her ladyship, and then all will
come out.

Tat. You will hear nothing, ma'am, but what I
have told you already.

Lady Rest. Tattle, Tattle, I took you up in the
country in hopes gratitude would make you my
friend. But you are as bad as the rest of them.
Conceal all you know: it is of very little conse-
quence. I now see through the whole affair. Though
it is the picture of a man, yet I am not to be deceived:
I understand it all. This is some former gallant.
The creature gave this to Sir John as a proof that
she had no affection for any one but himself.—
What art he must have had to induce her to this!—
I have found him out at last.

Sir JOHN, peeping in.

Sir John. What does she say?

Lady Rest. I have seen enough to convince me what kind of man he is. The fate of us poor women is hard: we all wish for husbands, and they are the torment of our lives.

Tat. There is too much truth in what you say, ma'am.

Sir John. You join her, do you, Mrs. Iniquity?

Lady Rest. What a pity it is, Tattle, that poor women should be under severer restraints than the men are!

Sir John. You repine for want of freedom, do you?

Lady Rest. Cruel laws of wedlock. The tyrant-husband may triumph in his infidelity. He may securely trample upon all laws of decency and order: it redounds to his credit; gives him a fashionable air of vice, while a poor woman is obliged to submit to his cruelty. She remains tied to him for life, even though she has reason to entertain a mortal hatred for him.

Sir John. Oh! very well argued, madam!

Lady Rest. What a pity it is, Tattle, that we cannot change our husbands, as we do our earrings or our gloves!

Sir John. There is a woman of spirit!

Lady Rest. Tattle! will you own the truth to me about that girl?

Tat. I really have told you the truth, madam.

Lady Rest. You won't discover, I see: very well! you may go down stairs.

Tat. I assure your ladyship——

Lady Rest. Go down stairs.

Tat. Yes, ma'am.

[Exit.

Lady Rest. Would I had never seen my husband's face!

Sir John. I am even with you : I have as good wishes for you, I assure you.

Lady Rest. This picture here—Oh the base man !

Sir John. The picture of her gallant, I suppose.

Lady Rest. This is really a handsome picture : what a charming countenance ! it is perfumed, I fancy : the scent is agreeable.

Sir John. The jade, how eagerly she kisses it !

Lady Rest. Why had I not such a dear, dear man, instead of the brute, the monster——

Sir John. Monster !—She does not mince the matter : plain downright English ! I must contain my rage, and steal upon her meditations—So—so—so——

[*Enters on tiptoe.*]

Lady Rest. There is no falsehood in this look.

Sir John. [*Looking over her shoulder.*] Oh ! what a handsome dog she has chosen for herself ?

Lady Rest. With you, I could be for ever happy !

Sir John. You could, could you ?

[*Snatches the picture.*]

Lady Rest. [*Screams out.*] Mercy on me !—Oh ! is it you, sir ?

Sir John. Now, madam, now, false one, have I caught you ?

Lady Rest. You are come home at last, I find, sir.

Sir John. My Lady Restless, my Lady Restless, what can you say for yourself now ?

Lady Rest. What can I say for myself, Sir John ?

Sir John. Ay, madam ! this picture——

Lady Rest. Yes, sir, that picture !

Sir John. Will be evidence——

Lady Rest. Of your shame, Sir John.

Sir John. Of my shame! 'tis very true what she says: yes, madam, it will be an evidence of my shame! I feel that but too sensibly. But on your part——

Lady Rest. You own it then, do you?

Sir John. Own it! I must own it, madam; though confusion cover me, I must own it: it is what you have deserved at my hands.

Lady Rest. I deserve it, Sir John! find excuses if you will. Cruel, cruel man!——to make me this return at last. I cannot bear it. Oh! oh! [*Cries.*] Such black injustice!

Sir John. You may weep; but your tears are lost: they fall without effect. I now renounce you for ever. This picture will justify me to the wide world; it will shew what a base woman you have been.

Lady Rest. What does the man mean?

Sir John. The picture of your gallant, madam! the darling of your amorous hours, who gratifies your luxurious appetites abroad, and——

Lady Rest. Scurrilous wretch! Oh! fir, you are at your old stratagem, I find: recrimination, you think, will serve your turn.

Sir John. It is a pity, you know, madam, that a woman should be tied to a man for life, even though she has a mortal hatred for him.

Lady Rest. Artful hypocrite!

Sir John. That she can't change her husband as she does her ear-rings or her gloves.

Lady Rest. Sir John, this is your old device: this won't avail you.

Sir John. Had the original of this fallen to your lot, you could kiss the picture for ever. You can gloat upon it, madam, glue your very lips to it.

Lady Rest. Shallow artifice!

Sir John. With him you could be for ever happy.

Lady Rest. This is all in vain, Sir John.

Sir John. Had such a dear, dear man fallen to your lot, instead of the brute, the monster—Am I a monster? I am, and you have made me so. The world shall know your infamy.

Lady Rest. Oh! brave it out, fir, brave it out to the last: harmless, innocent man! you have nothing to blush for, nothing to be ashamed of: you have no intrigues, no private amours abroad. I have not seen any thing, not I.

Sir John. Madam, I have seen, and I now see your paramour.

Lady Rest. That air of confidence will be of great use to you, fir. You have no convenient to meet you under my very window, to loll softly in your arms!

Sir John. Hey! how!

Lady Rest. Her arm thrown carelessly round your neck! Your hand tenderly applied to her cheek.

Sir John. 'Sdeath! that's unlucky—she will turn it against me. [Aside.

Lady Rest. You are in confusion, are you, fir? But why should you? You meant no harm—' You are safe with me, my dear—will you step into my house, my love?'—Yes, fir, you would fain bring her into my very house.

Sir John. My Lady Restless, this evasion is mean and paltry. You beheld a young lady in distress.

Lady Rest. I know it, and you, tender-hearted man, could care for her out of mere compassion: you could gaze wantonly out of charity; from pure benevolence of disposition you could convey her to some convenient dwelling. Oh! Sir John, Sir John.

Sir John. Madam, this well-acted passion——

Lady Rest. Don't imagine she has escaped me, sir.

Sir John. You may talk and rave, ma'am; but, depend upon it, I shall spare no pains to do myself justice on this occasion. Nor will I rest till——

Lady Rest. Oh! fie upon you, Sir John: these artifices——

Sir John. Nor will I rest, madam, until I have found, my means of this instrument here in my hand, who your darling is. I will go about it straight. Ungrateful, treacherous woman! [*Exit.*

Lady Rest. Yes, go, under that pretext, in pursuit of your licentious pleasures. This ever has been his scheme to cloak his wicked practices: abandoned man! to face me down too, after what my eyes so plainly beheld! I wish I could wring that secret out of Tattle. I'll step to my own room directly, and try by menaces, by wheedling, by fair means, by foul means, by every means, to wrest it from her.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Park. Enter Sir JOHN and ROBERT.

Sir John. Come hither, Robert. Look at this picture.

Rob. Yes, sir.

Sir John. Let me watch his countenance. Well! well! dost thou know it, Robert?

Rob. 'Tis a mighty handsome picture, fir.

Sir John. A handsome picture!—— [*Aside.*]

Rob. The finest lady in the land need not desire a handsomer man, fir.

Sir John. How well he knows the purposes of it! —Well! well! honest Robert, tell me: well—who is it?—tell me.

Rob. Sir!

Sir John. You know whose picture it is: I know you do. Well! well! who—who—who is it?

Rob. Upon my word, fir, it is more than I can tell.

Sir John. Not know! I am convinced you do. So own the truth: don't be a villain; don't.

Rob. As I am an honest man, fir——

Sir John. Be an honest man then, and tell me. Did you never see such a smooth-faced, fiery-eyed, warm-complexioned, taper young fellow here about my house?

Rob. Never, fir.

Sir John. Not with my wife!—to drink chocolate of a morning, tea of an evening? Come, honest Robert, I'll give you a lease of a good farm. What say you? A lease for your life—well! well!—you may take your wife's life into the bargain. Well!

Rob. Believe me, Sir John, I never saw——

Sir John. I'll add your child's life. Come, speak out—your own life, your wife's life, and your child's! now! now! a lease for three lives! Now, Robert!

Rob. As I hope for mercy, I never saw any such a gentleman.

Sir John. Robert, Robert, you are bribed by my wife.

Rob. No, as I am a sinner, sir.

Sir John. And the worst of sinners you will be, if you are a confederate in this plot against my peace and honour. Reflect on that, Robert.

Enter a Footman.

Foot. Pray, does not Sir John Restless live somewhere hereabout?

Sir John. He does, friend; what is your business with him?

Foot. My business is with his lady.

Sir John. I guessed as much. [*Aside.*]

Foot. I have a letter here for my Lady Restless, sir.

Sir John. A letter for my lady!—from whom, pray?

Foot. From my Lord Conquest.

Sir John. My Lord Conquest! very well, friend: you may give the letter to me. I am Sir John Restless: that there is my house. Let me have the letter: I will take care of it.

Foot. I was ordered to deliver it into my lady's own hand.

Sir John. The devil you was! I must have the letter. I'll buy it of the rascal. [*Aside.*] Here, take this for your trouble, friend. [*Gives him money.*] And I'll take care of the letter.

Foot. I humbly thank your honour. [*Exit.*]

Sir John. Now, now, now; let me see what this is. Now, my Lady Restless: now false one, now.

[*Reads.*

‘MADAM,

‘My Lady Conquest being gone into the country for a few days, I have judged it proper to send a speedy answer to yours, and to assure you, for your peace of mind, that you need not entertain the least suspicion of Marmalet, my lady’s woman. She has lived some years in my family, and I know her by experience to be an honest, trusty girl, incapable of making mischief between your ladyship and Sir John. I have the honour to be,

Madam, your very humble servant,

CONQUEST.’

So, so, so!—Marmalet is a trusty girl! one that will not make mischief between man and wife! that is to say, she will discover nothing against my Lady Restless! for her peace of mind he lets madam know all this too! she may go on boldly now; my Lady Conquest is gone into the country, Marmalet is trusty, and my lord has given her the most speedy notice. Very well! very well! proofs thicken upon proofs. Shall I go directly and challenge his lordship?—No—no—that won’t do. Watch him closely, that will do better. If I could have a word in private with the maid—Robert, Robert, come hither. Step to my Lord Conquest’s—but with caution proceed—enquire there for Marmalet, the maid.

Rob. I know her, fir.

Sir John. He knows her!

[*Aside.*

Rob. She visits our Tattle, fir.

Sir John. Visits our Tattle!—it is a plain case.
[*Aside.*] Enquire for that girl: but with caution: tell her to meet me privately: unknown to any body; in the dusk of the evening; in the Bird-Cage walk, yonder.

Rob. I will, sir.

Sir John. And don't let Tattle see her. Tattle has engaged her in her mistress's interest. I see how it is. Don't let any of my servants see her: go directly, Robert. Now shall I judge what regard you have for me. But, hark ye! come hither! a word with you. Should it be known that this girl converses with me; should my lady have the least item of it, they will be upon their guard. Let her come wrapped up in darkness; concealed from every observer, with a mask on. Ay, let it be with a mask.

Rob. A mask, Sir John? Won't that make her be remarked the more?

Sir John. No, no, let her come masked; I will make every thing sure. Robert, bring this about for me, and I am your friend for ever.

Rob. I will do my endeavour, sir. [Exit.]

Sir John. I'll now take a turn round the Park, and try if I can find the minion this picture belongs to. [Exit.]

Enter BEVERLEY and BELLMONT.

Bev. Yes, they had almost surpris'd us: but at sight of her father, Belinda gave the word, and away I darted down towards the canal.

Bell. Was Sir William with him?

Bev. Yes; they had been plotting our ruin. But we shall out-officer them, it is to be hoped.

Bel. Yes, and it is also to be feared that we shall not.

Bev. Hey! you alarm me: no new mine sprung!

Bel. Nothing but the old story. Our wise fathers are determined. At the turning of yonder corner they came both full tilt upon Clarissa and me.

Bev. Well, and how! what passed?

Bel. Why, they were scarcely civil to your sister. Sir William fixed his surly eye upon me for some time: at last he began: you will run counter to my will, I see: you will be ever dangling after that girl: but Mr. Blandford and I have agreed upon the match: and then he peremptorily commanded me to take my leave of Clarissa, and fix my heart upon your Belinda.

Bev. And did you so?

Bel. And did you so? How can you ask such a question? Sir, says I, I must see the lady home, and off I marched, arm in arm, with her, my father bawling after me, and I bowing to him, 'Sir, your humble servant, I wish you a good morning, sir.'—He continued calling out: I kissed my hand to him; and so we made our escape.

Bev. And where have you left Clarissa?

Bel. At home; at your house.

Bev. Well! and do you both continue in the same mind; is to-morrow to be your wedding-day?

Bel. Now are you conjuring up a thousand horrid fancies to torment yourself. But don't be alarmed, my dear Beverley. I shall leave you your Be-

linda, and content myself with the honour of being your brother-in-law.

Bev. Sir, the honour will be to me—But uneasy!—ha, ha!—no—no—I am not uneasy, nor shall I ever be so again.

Bel. Keep that resolution, if you can. Do you dine with us at the club?

Bev. With all my heart: I'll attend you.

Bel. That's right; let us turn towards the Mall, and saunter there till dinner.

Bev. No, I can't go that way yet. I must enquire how Belinda does, and what her father said to her. I have not seen her since we parted in the morning.

Bel. And now, according to custom, you will make her an apology for leaving her, when there was an absolute necessity for it, and you'll fall to an explanation of circumstances that require no explanation at all, and refine upon things, and torment yourself and her into the bargain.

Bev. Nay, if you begin with your raillery, I am off: your servant; *a l'honneur*. [*Exit.*]

Bel. [*Alone.*] Poor Beverley!—Tho' a handsome fellow, and of agreeable talents, he has such a strange diffidence in himself, and such a solicitude to please, that he is every moment of his life most ingeniously elaborating his own uneasiness.

Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir John. Not yet, not yet; nobody like it as yet. Ha! who is that hovering about my house?—If that should be he now!—I'll examine him

nearer—Pray, fir—what the devil shall I say?—

Pray, fir—

Bel. Sir!

Sir John. I beg pardon for troubling you, fir; but pray what o'clock is it by your watch?

Bel. By my watch, fir!—I'll let you know in a moment.

Sir John. Let me examine him now—

[*Looks at him, and then at the picture.*]

Bel. Egad, I am afraid my watch is not right: it must be later.

[*Looking at his watch.*]

Sir John. It is not like him—

[*Comparing the picture.*]

Bel. It does not go, I am afraid. [*Puts it to his ear.*]

Sir John. The eye—no!

Bel. Why, fir, by my watch it wants a quarter of three.

Sir John. It is not he: and yet—no—no—no—I am still to seek.

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. Bellmont! Another word with you.

Sir John. Here comes another; they are all swarming about my house.

Bev. I have seen her; I have seen Belinda, my boy: she will be with Clarissa in the Park immediately after dinner, you rogue.

Sir John. I want to see his face; this may be the original.

Bev. Her father has been eating her in his usual manner; but your marriage with my sister will settle every thing.

Sir John. I'll walk round him. [*Sings.*] Loll toll loll—[*Looks at him.*—ha! it has his air. [*Sings.*] Loll toll loll,—and it has his eye! Loll toll loll—
[*Walks to and fro.*

Bev. Pr'ythee, Bellmont, don't be such a dangling lover, but consummate at once, for the sake of your friend.

Sir John. It has his nose for all the world.

Bel. Do you spirit your sister up to keep her resolution, and to-morrow puts you out of all pain.

Sir John. Loll toll loll—it has his complexion; the same glowing, hot, amorous complexion.

[*Sings and looks uneasy.*

Bev. Who is this gentleman?

Bel. An odd fellow he seems to be.

Sir John. Loll toll loll—it has his shoulders. Loll toll loll—Ay, and I fancy the mole upon the cheek too. I wish I could view him nearer: loll toll loll!

Bel. He seems mad, I think. Where are his keepers?

Sir John. Begging your pardon, sir—Pray, [*Looking at the picture.*]—Pray, sir, can you tell whether we shall have a Spanish war?

Bev. Not I truly, sir. [*To Bellmont.*] Here is a politician out of his senses.

Bel. He has been talking to me too: he is too well dressed for a poet.

Bev. Not, if he has had a good subscription.

Sir John. He has the mole sure enough. [*Aside.*

Bev. Let us step this way, to avoid this impertinent blockhead.

Sir John. Ay ! he wants to sneak off. Guilt ! guilt ! conscious guilt ! I'll make sure of him. Pray, fir,—I beg your pardon—Is not your name Wild-air ?

Bev. No, fir, Beverley, at your service.

Sir John. Have you no relation of that name ?

Bev. None.

Sir John. You are very like a gentleman of that name—a friend of mine, whose picture I have here—Will you give me leave just to—

[Compares him with the picture.]

Bev. An odd adventure this, Bellmont.

Bel. Very odd, indeed.

Bev. Do you find any likeness, fir ?

Sir John. Your head a little more that way, if you please. Ay, ay ! it is he. Yes, a plain case ; this is my man, or rather,—this is my wife's man.

Bev. Did you ever know any thing so whimsical ?

Bel. Never—ha, ha, ha !

Sir John. They are both laughing at me. Ay ! and I shall be laughed at by the whole town, pointed at, hooted at, and gazed at !

Bev. What do I see ? 'Sdeath, the setting of that picture is like what I gave to Belinda. Distraction ! if it is the same—

[Drawing near him.]

Sir John. He makes his approach, and means, I suppose, to snatch it out of my hand. But I'll prevent him, and so into my pocket it goes. There, lie safe there.

Bev. Confusion ! he puts it up in a hurry. Will you be so good, fir, as to favour me with a—

Sir John. Sir, I wish you a good day.

Bev. With a sight of that picture for a moment ?

Sir John. The picture, fir—Po!—a mere daub.

Bev. A motive of curiosity, fir—

Sir John. It is not worth your seeing. I wish you a good day.

Bev. I shall take it as a favour.

Sir John. A paltry thing. I have not a moment to spare; my family is waiting dinner. Sir, I wish you a good morning. [*Runs into his house.*]

Bev. Death and fire! Bellmont, my picture!

Bel. Oh! no—no such thing.

Bev. But I am sure of it. If Belinda—

Bel. What, relapsing into suspicion again!

Bev. Sir, I have reason to suspect. She flights me, disdains me, treats me with contempt.

Bel. But I tell you, that unhappy temper of yours—Pr'ythee, man, leave teasing yourself, and let us adjourn to dinner.

Bev. No, fir; I shan't dine at all. I am not well.

Bel. Ridiculous! how can you be so absurd? I'll bett you twenty pounds that is not your picture.

Bev. Done; I take it.

Bel. With all my heart; and I'll tell you more; if it be yours, I will give you leave to be as jealous of her as you please. Come, now let us adjourn.

Bev. I attend you. In the evening we shall know the truth. If it be that I gave Belinda, she is false, and I am miserable. [*Exeunt.*]

Sir JOHN. [*Peeping after them.*]

Sir John. There he goes; there he goes! the destroyer of my peace and happiness!—I'll follow him, and make sure that he has given me the right name; and then, my Lady Restless, the mine is sprung, and I have done with you for ever. [*Exit.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

The former Scene continues. Enter BELINDA and CLARISSA.

Belinda.

BUT have you really fixed every thing, Clarissa?

Cla. Positively, and to-morrow morning makes me his.

Belin. To-morrow morning!

Cla. Yes, to-morrow morning I release Mr. Bellmont from his fetters, and resign my person to him.

Belin. Why, that is what we poor women, after all the victories of our charms, all the triumphs of our beauty, and all the murders of our eyes, must come to at last.

Cla. Well, and in that we but imitate the men. Don't we read of them conquering whole kingdoms, and then submitting at last to be governed by the vanquished.

Belin. Very true, Clarissa; and I don't know but you are a heroine equal in fame to any of them; nay superior: for your scheme, I take it, is not to unpeople the world.

Cla. Pr'ythee, don't talk so wildly. To tell you the truth, now that I have settled the affair, I begin to be alarmed at what I have done.

Belin. Oh! dear, dear affectation.

Cla. Actually now, positively, I am terrified to death.

Belin. To be sure:—our sex must play its tricks, and summon up all its fantastic train of doubts and

fears. But courage, my dear, don't be frightened; for the same sex within that heart of yours will urge you on, and never let you be at rest, till you have procured yourself a tyrant for life.

Cla. A tyrant, Belinda! I think more generously of Mr. Bellmont, than to imagine he will usurp to himself an ill use of his power.

Belin. To deal candidly I am of your opinion. But tell me now, am not I a very good girl, to resign such a man to you?

Cla. Why, indeed, I must confess the obligation.

Belin. Ay! but to resign him for one whose temper does not promise that I shall live under so mild a government.

Cla. How do you mean?

Belin. Why, Mr. Beverley's strange caprices, suspicions, and unaccountable whimsies, are enough to alarm one upon the brink of matrimony.

Cla. Well, I vow I can't help thinking, Belinda, that you are a little subject to vain surmises and suspicions yourself.

Belin. Now, you are an insincere girl. You know I am of a temper too generous, too open——

Cla. I grant all that, but by this constant repetition of the same doubts, I should not wonder to see you most heartily jealous of him in the end.

Belin. Jealous!—Oh heavens!—jealous indeed!

Cla. Well, I say no more. As to my brother, here he comes, and let him speak for himself.

Enter BEVERLEY and BELLMONT.

Bel. Well argued, sir: you will have it your own way, and I give up the point. Ladies your most

obedient. I hope we have not transgressed our time.

Belin. Not in the least; you are both very exact. True as the dial to the sun.

Bew. [*In a peevish manner.*] Although it be not shone upon.

Belin. Although it be not shone upon, Mr. Beverley! why with that dejected air, pray sir?

Bel. There again now! you two are going to commence wrangling lovers once more. Apropos, Belinda—now Beverley, you shall see—be so good, ma'am, as to let me see this gentleman's picture.

Belin. His picture! what can you want it for? You shall have it. [*Searching her pocket.*]

Bel. Now, Beverley, do you confess how wrong you have been?

Bew. Why, I begin to see my mistake. Say not a word to her; she'll never forgive me, if you discover my infirmity. [*Apart.*]

Belin. It is not in that pocket: it must be here.

[*Searches.*]

Bel. You have been sad company on account of this strange suspicion.

Bew. I own it; let it drop; say no more. [*Aside.*]

Belin. Well, I protest and vow—Where can it be? Come, gentlemen, this is some trick of yours: you have it among ye. Mr. Bellmont, Mr. Beverley, pray return it to me.

Bew. No, ma'am, it is no trick of ours. [*Angrily.*]

Belin. As I live and breathe I have not got it.

Bew. What think you now, Bellmont?

Bel. She'll find it presently, man; don't shew your humours: be upon your guard; you'll undo yourself else. Clarissa, shall you and I faunter down this walk?

Gla. My brother seems out of humour: what is the matter now?

Bel. I'll tell you presently: let us step this way.

[Exit with Clarissa.]

Belin. Well, I declare, I don't know what is come of this odious picture.

Bev. This odious picture! how she expresses it!

Belin. You may look grave, fir, but I have it not.

Bev. I know you have not, ma'am; and though you may imagine——

Belin. Imagine! what do you mean?—Imagine what?

Bev. Don't imagine that I am to be led blindfold as you please.

Belin. Heavens! with what gravity that was said!

Bev. I am not to be deceived; I can see all round me.

Belin. You can?

Bev. I can, madam.

Belin. Well, and how do you like your prospect?

Bev. Oh! you may think to pass it off in railery: but that picture I have this day seen in the hands of another; in the hands of the very gentleman to whom you gave it.

Belin. To whom I gave it?—have a care, fir; this is another symptom of your jealous temper.

Bev. But I tell you, madam, I saw it in his hand.

Belin. Who is the gentleman?—What's his name?

Bev. His name, madam?—'sdeath! I forgot that circumstance. Though I don't know his name, madam, I know his person, and that is sufficient.

Belin. Go on, fir: you are making yourself very ridiculous in this matter.—Ha, ha!——

Bev. You may laugh, madam, but it is no laughing matter, that let me assure you.

Belin. Oh! brave—follow your own notions. I gave it away: I have scorned your present. Ha, ha! Poor Mr. Beverley!

Bev. I don't doubt you, ma'am: I believe you did give it away.

Belin. Mighty well, fir; think so if you please. I shall leave you to your own imagination: it will find wherewithal to entertain you. Ha, ha! the self tormenting Beverley. Yonder I see Clarissa and Mr. Bellmont. I will join them this instant. Your servant, fir. Amuse yourself with your own fancies—ha, ha! [Exit.

Bev. [*Alone.*] Plague and distraction!—I can't tell what to make of this. She carries it off with an air of confidence. And yet if that be my picture, which I saw this morning, then it is plain I am only laughed at by her. The dupe of her caprice!—I cannot bear it.

Enter BELINDA, CLARISSA, and BELLMONT.

Belin. Observe him now. Let us walk by him without taking any notice. Let us talk of any thing rather than be silent. What a charming evening!

Cla. And how gay the Park looks!—mind the gentleman!

Belin. Take no notice; I beg you won't. Suppose we were to shew ourselves in the Mall, Clarissa, and walk our charms there, as the French express it?

Bel. Ha, ha!—Beverley:—what fixed in contemplation!

Bev. Sir, I beg—I choose to be alone, sir.

Bel. Belin. and Cla. Ha, ha, ha!

Bev. Pshaw! impertinent.

[*Aside.*

Belin. Oh! for heaven's sake, let us indulge the gentleman. Let us leave him to himself, and his ill-humours. This way, this way. You shall go home and have your tea with me. Mr. Beverley, [*She kisses her hand to him at some distance, and laughs at him.*] your servant, sir: I wish you a good evening. *A l'honneur.*

[*Exeunt.*

Bev. [*Alone.*] Distraction! you may retire. Your servant, madam. Racks and torment! this is too much. If she has parted with the picture; if she has given it away—but she may only have lent it, or she may have lost it. But even that, even that is an injury to me. Why should she not be more careful of it? I will know the bottom of it. That's the house the gentleman went into. I'll wait on him directly: but they are watching me. I'll walk another way, to elude their observation. Ay, ay, you may laugh, ma'am, but I shall find out all your artifices.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment at Sir JOHN'S. Enter Lady RESTLESS, meeting ROBERT.

Lady Rest. Where are you going, sir?

Rob. To my master's room, madam, to leave these clothes there.

Lady Rest. Stay, sir; stay a moment. [*Searches the pockets.*] Where are his letters?

Rob. Letters, my lady! I know of no letters: I never touch his pockets.

Lady Rest. I guessed you would say so. You are Sir John's agent; the conductor of his schemes.

Rob. I, madam?

Lady Rest. You, sir, you are his secretary for love-affairs.

Rob. I collect his rents, my lady, and——

Lady Rest. Oh! sir, I am not to be deceived. I know you are my enemy.

Rob. Enemy, my lady; I am sure, as far as a poor servant dare, I am a friend to both.

Lady Rest. Then tell me honestly, have not you conveyed his letters out of my way?

Rob. Indeed, madam, not I.

Lady Rest. Then he has done it himself. Artful man! I never can find a line after him. Where did you go for him this morning?

Rob. This morning?

Lady Rest. Ay, this morning. I know he sent you somewhere. Where was it?

Rob. Upon my word, my lady——

Lady Rest. Very well, sir: I see how it is. You are all bent against me. I shall never be at rest till every servant in this house is of my own choosing. Is Tattle come home yet?

Rob. No, madam.

Lady Rest. Where can she be gadding? Hark! —I hear a rap at the door. This is Sir John, I suppose. Stay, let me listen. I don't know that voice. Who can it be? Some of his libertine company, I suppose.

Rob. My lady, if you will believe me——

Lady Rest. Hold your tongue, man: let me hear. You want to hinder me, do you?

Rob. Indeed, madam——

Lady Rest. Hold your tongue, I say; won't you hold your tongue? Go about your business, sir, go about your business. What does he say? [*Listening.*] I can't hear a word. Who is below there?

Enter TATTLE, with a Capuchin on.

Lady Rest. So, Mrs. Tattle, who is that at the door?

Tat. A gentleman, madam, speaking to William.

Lady Rest. And where have you been, mistress? How dare you go out without my leave?

Tat. Dear my lady, don't be angry with me. I was so terrified about what happened in the morning; and your ladyship was in such a perilous taking about it, that I went to desire Mrs. Marmalet would justify herself and me.

Lady Rest. Oh! very well, Mrs. Busy-body. You have been there, have you? You have been to frame a story among yourselves, have you, and to hinder

me from discovering? But I'll go to my Lady Conquest myself. I have had no answer to my letter, and 'tis you have occasioned it. Thanks to your meddling!

Tat. Dear my lady, if you will but give me leave: I have been doing you the greatest piece of service. I believe, in my conscience, there is something in what you suspect about Sir John.

Lady Rest. Do you? why? how?

Tat. I have seen Mrs. Marmalet, and I have made such a discovery!

Lady Rest. Have you, Tattle? Well! What? speak, tell me; what is it?

Rob. Robert has been there, madam, with a message from Sir John, who wants to see her in the evening; and he has desired——

Lady Rest. Blessings on you, Tattle: well, go on: tell me all.

Enter a Servant.

Lady Rest. What do you want, fir? Who called you? Go about your business.

Serv. Madam, there is a gentleman wants to speak with Sir John about a picture.

Lady Rest. I had forgot me. It was he rapped at the door, I suppose.

Serv. Yes, ma'am!

Lady Rest. About a picture!—This may lead to some further discovery. Desire the gentleman to step up stairs. [*Exit Servant.*]—and so, Tattle, Robert has been there?

Tat. Yes, ma'am.

Lady Rest. And Sir John wants to speak with Marmalet in the evening, and has desired—Oh! the base man!—what has he desired? Now he is discovered. What has he desired?

Tat. He has desired, ma'am,—the poor girl does not know what to make of it—She is very sober and discreet, I assure you, ma'am—he has desired, ma'am, in the dusk of the evening, that Mrs. Marmalet will come and——

Lady Rest. How unlucky this is? The gentleman is coming. I have a mind not to see him: and yet I will too. Tattle, do you step to my room; as soon as he goes, I will come to you, and hear all in private. [*Exit Tattle.*] In the dusk of the evening he desires to see her: abandoned wretch!

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. Madam——

[*Bows.*

Lady Rest. Pray walk in, sir.

[*Curties.*

Bev. I wanted a word with Sir John Restless, madam.

Lady Rest. About a picture?

Bev. Yes, madam, a picture I had given to a lady: and however insignificant in itself, it is to me of the highest consequence, as it may conduce to the explanation of an affair, in which the happiness of my life is concerned.

Lady Rest. The lady is young?

Bev. She is.

Lady Rest. And handsome?

Bev. In the highest degree; my heart is devoted to her; and I have reason to suspect that a present from me is not of so much value as I could wish.

To be plain, ma'am, I imagine she has given the picture away.

Lady Rest. As I guessed: my suspicions are just.

Bev. Your suspicions, ma'am! Did you suspect it was given to Sir John Restless?

Lady Rest. What I know of the matter shall be no secret to you. Pray, sir, have you spoke to the lady on this subject?

Bev. I have, but she knows nothing of the matter; she has lost it, she has mislaid it, she can give no account of it.

Lady Rest. She has given it to Sir John, sir, to shew him how little she regards it.

Bev. Given it to him?

Lady Rest. Given it to him, sir.

Bev. Then I have no further doubt.

Lady Rest. Of what?

Bev. Madam, I would not hurt your peace of mind; I would not give you an impression of Sir John, that may affect his character.

Lady Rest. Oh! sir; stand upon no ceremony with him; an injurious, false, licentious man!

Bev. Is that his character?

Lady Rest. Notoriously: he has made me miserable; false to his marriage vows, and warm in the pursuit of his pleasures abroad!—I have not deserved it of him. Oh! Sir John! Sir John! [*Cries.*

Bev. She weeps; the case is plain, and I am undone.

Lady Rest. Pray, sir, what is the lady's name?

Bev. Belinda Blandford.

Lady Rest. Belinda Blandford! So far I have discovered. [*Aside.*

Bev. Pray, madam, have you ever seen her?

Lady Rest. Seen her, fir! yes, I have seen too much of her.

Bev. You alarm me, madam. You have seen nothing improper, I hope.

Lady Rest. I don't know what you call improper. But, pray, what ought one to think of a young lady thrown familiarly into a gentleman's arms?

Bev. In his arms, madam! Sir John's arms!

Lady Rest. In Sir John's! in open day; in the Park; under my very window; most familiarly, wantonly reclining in his very arms.

Bev. Oh, Heavens!

Lady Rest. He clasping her with equal freedom round the waist!

Bev. False, false Belinda!

Lady Rest. Both interchanging fond, mutual glances.

Bev. Oh! madam, the whole is come to light, and I thank you for the discovery, though I am ruined by it. But give me leave: is all this certain?

Lady Rest. There can be no doubt, fir: these eyes beheld their amorous meeting.

Bev. Saw it yourself?

Lady Rest. Yes, all, all, fir. Sir John, I know, is capable of any thing, and you know what to think of Belinda, as you call her.

Bev. I now know what to think: I have long had reason to suspect.

Lady Rest. You have, fir? Then the whole affair is plain enough.

Bev. It is so. I meant an honourable connection with her;—but—

Lady Rest. But you see, fir!

Bev. Yes, I see; madam—you are sure Sir John has the picture?

Lady Rest. Sure, fir!—it is your own picture. I had it in my hands but a moment, and he flew with ardour, with impetuosity, like a fury flew to it, and recovered it from me. What could be the meaning of all that violence?

Bev. The meaning is too plain.

Lady Rest. And then, fir, when charged and pressed home with his guilt, most hypocritically he pretended to believe it the portrait of some favourite of mine. But you know, fir, how false that insinuation is.

Bev. Oh! madam, I can justify you—Ha, ha; that is but a poor evasion, and confirms me the more in my opinion. I return you many thanks, madam, and humbly take my leave.

Lady Rest. Sir, I am glad you thought it prudent to speak to me about this affair. If any other circumstances come to your knowledge, I shall take it as a favour if you will acquaint me with them; for, indeed, fir, I am very unhappy.

Bev. I am in gratitude bound to you, and my best services you shall ever command. Madam, your most obedient.—Oh! Belinda! Belinda! [*Exit.*]

Lady Rest. Now, Sir John, how will you be able to confront these stubborn facts? You are now seen through all your disguises; detected in your true colours. Tattle within here has fresh proofs against you, and your man Robert, and the whole house. I must hear Tattle's story this very moment. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

The Park. Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir John. Yes, yes, he told me his name honestly enough. Beverley is his name; and my Lady Restless, now your gallant, your paramour is known. What do I see? By all my wrongs, the very man again! coming out of my house before my face!

BEVERLEY and ROBERT come out of the House.

Bev. There, friend, there is something for your trouble.

Rob. I thank your honour.

Sir John. He bribes my servant too; and the fellow takes it! Both in their trade; both in their trade!

Bev. Could I have suspected her of such treachery? As I could wish: I take that to be Sir John Restless.

Sir John. This is he to whom I have so many obligations. *[Aside.*

Bev. Well encountered: your servant, sir.

Sir John. My servant, sir!—I rather take it you are my lady's servant.

Bev. You, if I don't mistake, Sir John, are a pretty general servant of the ladies. Pray, sir, have not you a picture of mine in your pocket?

Sir John. That, I suppose, you have heard from my good lady within there.

Bev. Yes, sir, and I have heard a great deal more from my lady.

Sir John. I don't in the least doubt it.

Bev. Sir, I do not mean to work myself up into any choler about such a trifling bauble. Since the lady has thought proper to give it to you——

Sir John. Do her justice, pray; she did not give it; so far she was true to you. I took it from her, sir.

Bev. Took it from her! That shews he is upon easy terms. [*Aside.*] It is of no consequence to me; I despise it, and you are welcome to make what use you will of it. This I will only say, that you have made me miserable.

Sir John. What, I have interrupted your happiness?

Bev. You have.

Sir John. And no doubt you think it cruel of me so to do.

Bev. Call it by what name you will: you have ruined me with the woman I doated on to distraction.

Sir John. A candid declaration! And so, sir, you doted on her, and never reflected that you were doing me the least injury?

Bev. Injury!——I promise you, sir, I will never injure you again, and so you may set your mind at peace. I here declare I will never hold farther intercourse with her.

Sir John. Oh! that is too late for me. I have now done with her myself. You are very welcome to the lady, sir! you may take her home with you as soon as you please. I forswear her, and so I shall tell my lady this moment. [*Going.*]

Bev. That will make her ladyship happy, no doubt.

Sir John. Yes, I dare say you know it will.

Bev. She told me as much, sir.

Sir John. She did!—why then you may depend I shall keep my word, and my lady may depend upon it too. And that, I suppose, will make you both happy, sir.

Bev. My happiness is past recalling: I disdain all further connection with the lady.

Sir John. Ay, you are tired of her?

Bev. I loath her, detest her, hate her as much as I ever loved her.

Sir John. And so do I too, I assure you. And so I shall tell my lady this very instant. Your servant, sir. If I can find proof sufficient, you shall hear of me, I promise you. [Exit.]

Bev. I see how it is: she has been connected with him, till she has palled his very appetite. 'Sdeath, I'll seek her this moment, upbraid her with her falsehood, and then—by heavens! I shall do it with regret. I feel a tug at my heart-string: but were I to be torn piece-meal, this shall be our last interview.

Enter BELINDA, CLARISSA, and BELLMONT.

Belin. Alas-a-day! poor soul! see where he takes his melancholy walk. Did not I tell you, Clarissa, that the stricken deer could not quit this place?

Cla. And did not I tell you, Belinda, that you could not keep away from the pursuit?

Bel. Pray, ma'am, do you want to be in at the death, or do you mean to bring the poor thing to life again?

Belin. I!—what do you mean?—You bring me this way.

Cla. Well! if that is the case, we had as good go home, for I want my tea.

Belin. Po! not yet: it is not fix o'clock.

Bel. and Cla. Ha, ha!

Belin. What do ye laugh at?

Cla. At you, my dear: why, 'tis past seven. Oh! Belinda, you are the stricken deer, I find.

Belin. Who I? Not I, truly; I——

Cla. My dear Belinda, I know you. Come, we will do the good-natured thing by you, and leave you to yourselves. Success attend you. Come, Mr. Bellmont. [*Exeunt.*]

Belin. Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train,
Fair Sacharissa lov'd, but lov'd in vain.

Bev. Po! po! [*Looking peevishly at her.*]

Belin. Won't you know me, sir?

Bev. Yes, madam, I know you: it is but too true that I know you.

Belin. Still gloomy and discontented! Come, come, under pain of my displeasure, brighten up this moment.

Bev. Silly, idle, ridiculous!

Belin. Take care of what you are about. When I proclaim a pardon, you had better embrace it, than reduce yourself to the necessity of sighing, vowing, protesting, writing to me, following me up and down, kneeling at my feet, imploring forgiveness——

Bev. Madam, you will never again see me humbled to that low degree.

Belin. Upon my word! ha, ha, ha!

Bev. Oh! you may laugh, ma'am: you have too long imposed upon my fond, easy credulity. But the witchery of your charms is over

Belin. Very well, fir! and you are your own man again.

Bev. I am, madam; and you may be your own woman again, or any body's woman, or every body's.

Belin. You grow rude, fir!

Bev. It is time to wave all ceremony, and to tell you plainly, that your falsehood——

Belin. My falsehood, fir!

Bev. Your falsehood!—I know the whole story. I loved you once, Belinda, tenderly loved you, and by Heaven I swear, it is with sorrow that I can no longer adore you. It is with anguish that I now bid you an everlasting farewell. [Going.]

Belin. Explain, fir: what action of my life?

Bev. Your prudence forsook you at last. It was too glaring; too manifest in open day.

Belin. Too manifest in open day!—Mr. Beverley I shall hate you.

Bev. All circumstances inform against you: my picture given away!

Belin. Insolent, provoking, wrong-headed man!—I'll confirm him in his error, to torment him as he deserves. [Aside.] Well, fir, what if I chose to give it away? I am mistress of my own actions, am I not?

Bev. I know that, ma'am: I know that; and I am not uneasy, ma'am.

Belin. So it seems—ha, ha!—why do you sigh, poor man?

Bev. Sigh, madam! I disdain it.

Belin. I am glad of it; now that is so manly! but pray watch yourself well, hold a guard upon all your

passions, otherwise they will make a fool of you again.

Bev. And do you take care you don't expose yourself again. Lolling familiarly in a gentleman's arms.

Belin. How?

Bev. Here, in the Park; in open day.

Belin. What can this mean?

Bev. He inviting you to his house!

Belin. Oh! I understand him now; when I fainted, all this was. I'll encourage his notion, to be revenged of his waspish temper. [*Aside.*] Well, sir, and what then?

Bev. What then?

Belin. Ha, ha! poor Mr. Beverley!—why should you be in a piteous taking, because I, in the gaiety of my heart, give away a picture I set no value on, or walk with a gentleman I do set a value on, or lean on his arm, or make the man happy by letting him draw on my glove.

Bev. Or draw off your glove, madam.

Belin. Ay, or draw it off.

Bev. Yes, or—or—or take any other liberties.

Belin. Very true.

Bev. You may make light of it, madam, but——

Belin. Why yes, a generous temper always makes light of the favours it confers.

Bev. And some generous tempers will make light of any thing to gratify their inclinations. Madam, I have done: I abjure you, eternally abjure you.

[*Going.*

Belin. Bon voyage!

Bev. Don't imagine that you will see me again.

Belin. Adieu.—Well, what, coming again?
Why do you linger so? [*Repeats affectedly.*]

Thus o'er the dying lamp, th' unsteady flame
Hangs quivering to a point!

Bev. With what an air she carries it! I have but this one thing more to tell you: by heaven I loved you, to excess I loved you; such is my weakness, I shall never quite forget you. I shall be glad, if hereafter I hear of your happiness, and if I can, no dishonour shall befall you.

Belin. Ho, ho!—Well, my obliging, generous Don Quixote, go and fight windmills, and castles in the air, and a thousand phantoms of your own creation, for your Dulcinea's sake! ho, ho, ho!

Bev. Confusion! Take notice, madam, that this is the last time of my troubling you.

Belin. I shall expect you to-morrow morning.

Bev. No, never; by heaven, never!

Belin. Exactly at ten; your usual hour.

Bev. May I perish at your feet, if ever again—

Belin. Oh, brave; but remember ten; kneeling, beseeching, imploring, your hand upon your heart, —'Belinda, won't you forgive me?'

Bev. Damnation!—I have done: I here bid you an eternal adieu!—farewell for ever! [*Exit.*]

Belin. I shall wait breakfast for you. Ha, ha! poor Beverley! he cannot command his temper. But, in spite of all his faults, I love him still. What the poet says of great wits, may be applied to all jealous lovers:

—To madness sure they're near allied;

And thin partitions do their bounds divide. [*Exit.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

An Apartment in BEVERLEY's House. Enter BE-

VERLEY.

Beverley.

So, Belinda, I have escaped your snares: I have recovered my freedom. And yet, if she had not proved false, what a treasure of love and happiness had I in store! her beauty—po!—no more of her beauty: it is external, superficial, the mere result of features and complexion. A deceitful Syren, to draw the unwary into a dream of happiness, and then wake him into wonder at the storms and tempests that gather round him. I have done with her; I'll think no more of her. Oh, Belinda, Belinda!

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. Please your honour—

Bev. She that in every part of life seemed so amiable.

Brush. Sir—

Bev. Under so fair a mask to wear such loose designs!

Brush. What is he musing upon?—Sir—

Bev. I have done with her for ever; ay, for ever,
[Hums a tune.]—I swear for ever—[Sings.]—Are you there, Brush?

Brush. Yes, your honour: here is a letter.

Bev. So unforeseen, so unexpected a discovery!
—Well, well, well! What did you say, Brush?

Brush. A letter for your honour, sir.

D

Bev. Give it to me another time. [*Walks about.*]
I'll not make myself uneasy about her.

Brusb. I fancy your honour will be glad to have it now.

Bev. What did you say?

Brusb. It is a letter from Madam Belinda, sir.

Bev. Belinda! I won't read it: take it away.

Brusb. Hey, which way is the wind now? Some quarrel, I suppose: but the falling out of lovers.—Must I take it away, sir?

Bev. I have done with her for ever.

Brusb. Have done with Madam Belinda, sir?

Bev. Oh, Brush, she is—but I will not proclaim her shame. No, let me still be tender of her. I will see her no more, Brush, that is all; hear from her no more: she shall not wind herself about my heart again. I'll go out of town directly: order my chaise to the door.

Brusb. Had not you better defer it till 'morrow morning, sir? perhaps then——

Bev. No, no; directly; do as I bid you.

Brusb. Consider, sir, if your mind should change, the trouble of coming back post-haste——

Bev. No, never; I say, never: what to her, who could smile on me, on him, on a thousand? No; she shall know that I am a man, and no longer the dupe of her artifice.

Brusb. But, sir, you know that one solitary tear, which, after miserably chafing for it half an hour together, she will painfully distil from the corner of her eye, will extinguish all this rage, and then——

Bev. Po, po! you know nothing of the matter. Go and order the chaise directly.

Brush. Yes, sir. I suppose a couple of shirts will be sufficient, sir?—you will hardly stay them out.

Bev. Pack up all, sir, I shall stay in the country a whole month, if it be necessary.

Brush. An entire month, sir?

Bev. I am resolved, fixed, and determined; and so do as I have ordered you.—[*Exit Brush.*]—So shall I disentangle myself from her entirely, so shall I forget the fondness my foolish heart had conceived for her. I hate her, loath her, pity her, am sorry for her, and love her still. I must expel this weakness: I will think no more of her: and yet—*Brush, Brush!*—I may as well see her letter too: only to try what her cunning can suggest.

Enter BRUSH.

Bev. You may as well leave the letter, *Brush.*

Brush. Yes, sir; I thought as much. [*Exit.*]

Bev. [*Alone.*] Now what varnish will she put upon the matter?—[*Reads.*]—‘The false gaiety of my heart, through which my dear Beverley might have read my real anguish, at our last meeting, has now subsided. If you will come to me, I will not laugh at your inquietude of temper, but will clear all your doubts, and shew you how much I am, my dearest Beverley, unalterably yours,

BELINDA BLANDFORD.’

Pshaw! po! satisfy my doubts: I have no doubts; I am convinced. These arts prevail no more. Ha, ha! [*Laughs peevishly.*]—‘My dear Beverley’—[*Reads, and tears the letter by degrees.*]—‘real anguish’—ha, ha!—[*Tears another piece.*]—‘inquietude of temper’—[*Another piece.*]—‘clear all

your doubts'—Po, po, po!—ha, ha, ha!—
 damnation!—I'll think no more of her—*[Tears
 another bit.]*—ha, ha!—'dearest Beverley'—
 ha, ha!—artful woman!—unalterably your's
 —false, false, false!—*[Tears another piece.]*—
 I'll not make myself uneasy about her. Perfidy,
 treachery, and ingratitude! *[Fixes his eye, looks un-
 easy, and tears the letter in a violent passion]*

Enter CLARISSA and BELLMONT.

Cla. So, brother.

Bel. Beverley!

Bev. Sister, your servant: Mr. Bellmont, yours.

Cla. You seem melancholy, brother.

Bev. No, not I. I am in very good spirits.

Cla. Ha, ha! my dear brother that is seen
 through: you are now upon the rack.

Bev. What, about a woman, a false, ungrateful
 woman!

Bel. Whom you still admire.

Cla. To whom you'll be upon your knees in five
 minutes.

Bev. You are mistaken: I am going out of town.

Bel. But you will take your leave.

Bev. I have done that, once for all.

Cla. Has not she writ to you?

Bev. She has; and there—there you see the ef-
 fect of her letter. You will see that I shall main-
 tain a proper firmness on the occasion.

Bel. My dear Beverley, have done with this
 mockery: you but deceive yourself.

Bev. You want to deceive me, sir: but it is in
 vain. What, plead for treachery, for falsehood,
 for deceit?

Cla. No, fir, but for my friend, my lovely friend, for Belinda, for truth, for innocence.

Bev. You don't know all the circumstances.

Cla. But we do know all the circumstances, and, my dear brother, you have behaved very ill.

Bev. Heaven knows, I have not; and yet, Heaven knows, I should be glad to be convinced I have.

Cla. I will be your friend, and give you a hint. We women are soft and compassionate in our nature; go to her without delay, fall at her feet, beg her pardon, drop a tear or two, and all will be well again.

Bev. Do you come to make sport of me? May contempt and beggary attend me; may all the calamities of life befall me; may shame, confusion, and disquiet of heart for ever sting me, if I hold further intercourse with her: if I do not put her from my thoughts for ever. Did you leave her at home?

Cla. We did.

Bev. Well, let her stay there: it is of no consequence to me. How did she bear what passed between us?

Cla. Like a sweet girl as she is: she behaved like an angel: I shall love her better than ever for her good humour.

Bev. Oh! I don't doubt her good humour. She has smiles at command. Let her smile, or not smile, 'tis all alike to me. Did she say any thing?

Cla. She told us the whole story, and told it in tears too.

Bev. Ay! them she can command too! But I have no curiosity about her. Was she in tears?

Cla. She was, and wept bitterly. How could you, brother, behave so rashly to so amiable a girl? Have you a pleasure in being the cause of her uneasiness?

Bev. I the cause?—you wrong me, by Heaven you wrong me: my Lady Restless was the cause. She told me such things; she planted daggers in my very heart.

Cla. You planted daggers in Belinda's heart. And it was barbarous. What, because a lady has not strength enough to bear up against a father, who is resolved to give her away to another, and because she faints out of excessive tenderness for you, and in that distress meets accidental relief from Sir John Restless at his own door?

Bev. How!

Cla. And because my Lady Restless sees this out of her window, and has a perverse talent of misinterpreting appearances into realities, to her own disadvantage; you must therefore fill your head with ungenerous suspicions? Oh! for shame, brother, how could you?

Bev. But, is all this true?—is it really the case?

Bel. How can you doubt it? You know Belinda too well: it is the case, man.

Bev. I should be glad to find it so.

Cla. Well! I tell you it is so. How could you think otherwise? you know she has the best heart in the world, and is so nice of honour, that she scorns all falsehood and dissimulation.

Bel. Ha, ha! my dear Beverley, you have done the absurdest thing.

Bev. Why, if what you say can be made to appear—but then she'll never forgive my past behaviour.

Cla. Po! you talk as if you were wholly unletter'd in the tempers of women. My dear brother, you know, you men can do what you please with us, when once you have gained an interest in our hearts. Go to her, I say, go to her, and make your peace.

Bev. May I depend upon what you say?

Cla. You may.

Bev. Then I'll fly to her this instant, humble myself to her, and promise by all my future life to atone for this brutal injury.

Enter BRUSH.

Brush. The chaise is at the door, sir.

Bev. You may put up again; I shan't go out of town.

Brush. No, sir!

Bev. No—ha, ha!—you may put up, and let me have the chariot directly.

Brush. Yes, sir; I knew it would come to this.

[*Exit.*

Bev. But do you think she will forgive me?

Cla. She will; love will plead your cause.

Bev. My dear sister, I am for ever obliged to you: and, Bellmont, I thank you too. How could I wrong her so? I shall behold her once again. I cannot help laughing at my own rashness. Is the chariot ready?—I won't stay for it; I am on the wing, my dear Belinda, to implore forgiveness. And so she fainted away in the Park, and my Lady

Restless saw Sir John afford her relief?—Ha, ha, ha!—whimsical enough. Ha, ha, ha! what a strange construction her crazy temper put upon it! Ha, ha! how could the woman be so foolish? My dear Belinda, I will fly to you this moment—ha, ha! [*Going, returns.*] Sir John shall give me back the picture, and, on my knees, I will once more present it to her.

Cla. So, so! you are come to yourself, I find.

Bel. I knew it would be so,

Bew. She shall have the picture. I'll find Sir John directly: and then—ha, ha! how could I be such a madman! ha, ha!—sister, your servant. Bellmont, yours. Ha, ha! what a piece of work has that foolish Lady Restless made for us all?

[*Exit singing.*]

Cla. Let us follow him: I must be present at their reconciliation.

[*Exit with Bellmont.*]

SCENE II.

An Apartment at BELINDA'S. Enter BELINDA.

Belin. This rash, unaccountable man! how could he entertain such a suspicion! ungrateful Beverley! he almost deserves I should never see him again.—Tippet! I sha'n't be easy till I hear from him. Tippet!

Enter TIPPET.

Belin. Is the servant returned from Mr. Beverley's?

Tip. Not yet, madam.

Belin. I wonder what keeps him. I am upon thorns till I see the dear, ungenerous man, and explain every thing to him. Oh, Mr. Beverley! how could you treat me so? But I was partly to blame; my Lady Restless inflamed his mind, and I should not have trifled with his passion. Is the other servant returned from Sir John Restless?

Tip. He is, madam.

Belin. And what answer?

Tip. Sir John will wait upon you himself, madam, directly.

Belin. Very well! I must get him to set every thing in its true light, and justify my conduct to Mr. Beverley. And yet the uncertainty of Beverley's temper alarms me strangely. His eternal suspicions! but there is nothing in that: my future conduct, my regard for him will cure that disease, and then——

Tip. I dare be sworn it will, ma'am.

Belin. Yes, I think it will: when he knows me better, he will learn to think generously of me. On my part, I think I can be sure he will meet with nothing but open, unsuspecting love.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir John Restless, madam.

Belin. Shew him in. Tipper, do you leave the room.

Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir John. In compliance with your commands, madam——

Belin. I am obliged to you, fir, for the trouble you have been pleased to give yourself. A particular circumstance has happened in your family, to my utter disquiet.

Sir John. Madam, there have happened things in my family, to my utter disquiet too.

Belin. I am sorry for that, fir. I have been made quite unhappy, and must beg, as it is in your power, that you will be kind enough to remove the cause of my uneasiness.

Sir John. Whatever I can do, you may command.

Belin. Sir, I thank you, and must tell you, that your lady has done me the most irreparable injury.

Sir John. She has done the same to me. My injuries are irreparable too. But how has she injured you, madam?

Belin. She has ruined me, fir, with the man I love to distraction.

Sir John. Now, here something else will come to light. [*Aside.*—How, how has she done that, madam?

Belin. She has entirely drawn off his affection from me.

Sir John. And fixed them upon herself, I suppose.

Belin. I don't say that, fir.

Sir John. But I dare say it; and I believe it.

Belin. Pardon me, fir, I don't charge the lady with any thing of that kind. But she has unaccountably taken it into her head to be jealous of me.

Sir John. Jealous of you!

Belin. Her ladyship saw the little offices of civility I received from you this morning; she misun-

derstood every thing, it seems, and has told the gentleman with whom I was engaged in a treaty of marriage, that improper freedoms have passed between us.

Sir John. Artifice! artifice! her usual policy, madam, to cover her own libertine ways.

Belin. I don't mean to say any thing harsh of the lady. But you know what foundation there is for this, and I hope will do me justice.

Sir John. Oh! madam, to the world, to the wide world I'll justify you. I will wait upon the gentleman. Who is he, madam? what's his name?

Belin. Beverley, sir.

Sir John. Beverley!

Belin. Yes, sir; you seem surpris'd. Do you know him, sir?

Sir John. Yes, yes, I know him; and he shall know me: my resentment he shall feel; he shall be answerable to me.

Belin. Answerable to you!

Sir John. To me, madam. I told you at first this was her scheme to shelter herself; and he, I suppose, is combined with her to give this turn to the affair, and to charge me with infidelity. But you, ma'am, can witness for me.

Belin. I can, sir; but can Mr. Beverley be capable of a dishonourable action?

Sir John. That point is clear enough. He has injured me in the highest degree, destroyed my happiness.

Belin. How, sir! are you sure of this?

Sir John. He has given her his picture; I caught her with her eyes rivetted to it; I heard her admi-

ration, her praises of it; her wishes that she had been married to such a man. I saw her print a thousand kisses on it; and in the very fact I wrested it out of her hand.

Belin. If I imagined him capable of what you say, I should scarcely be willing to join myself to him for life. Quarrel with me about his picture, and at the same time give it to another!

Sir John. Lady Restless had the picture. Without doubt, you must be very happy with a man of is gallantry.

Belin. Happy, sir! I should be miserable, distracted; I should break my heart. But do you think you have sufficient proof?

Sir John. I have seen him coming out of my house since, clandestinely, shunning every observant eye, with the characters of guilt in his face; and all the discourse I had with him, served only to convince me the more.

Belin. Abandoned wretch! was this the love he professed for me? Sir, I have only to hope you will vindicate me in this matter. I commend myself to your honour, and I thank you for this favour.

Sir John. Our evidence will mutually speak for each other, and confound their dark designs. Madam, I take my leave.

Belin. Sir, your most obedient.

Sir John. The gentleman shall feel my indignation.

Belin. You cannot treat him too severely.

Sir John. I will expose him, I promise you. Madam, your humble servant. [Exit.

Belin. Oh! Mr. Beverley, could I have imagined this? False! false man! and yet how shall I forget him? but I will make an effort, tho' it pierce me to the quick. I will tear him from my heart. This moment I will write to him, and forbid him to see me more. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

The Park. Enter Sir JOHN.

Sir John. If I can procure sufficient evidence, I shall bring the matter to a divorce, and make an example of them all. Would Marmalet were come: this is her time to a moment. If I can worm the secret out of her—Is not that she, yonder?—Not quite day-light enough to distinguish, but I think I perceive a person masked. Hift! hift! Mrs. Marmalet—she comes this way: it is she. Mrs. Marmalet, your servant.

Enter a Person Masked.

You are very good, Mrs. Marmalet—

Mask. Bless my heart, I am scared out of my senses.

Sir John. What's the matter, pray? what's the matter?

Mask. Oh, fir! I tremble like a leaf. I was accosted in a rude manner by some gentlemen yonder; I can't stay here, let us go into your house, fir; I beg you will.

Sir John. My house? would not any other house do as well?

Mask. Oh! no, fir; not for the world.

Sir John. Why my wife is not at home, and so I think I may venture: not but I had rather it were elsewhere.

Mask. Indeed, Sir John, I am frightened out of my senses. You will do me a favour if you will take me into the house.

Sir John. Say no more: it shall be so. Robert—

Rob. Is that Sir John? [Opening the door.]

Sir John. Your lady is not at home, Robert, is she?

Rob. No, sir.

Sir John. Then do you go in, and take care that nobody sees Mrs. Marmalet with me. Come, I'll shew you the way. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.

Sir JOHN's House. Enter TATTLE, and BEVERLEY.

Tat. [As she enters.] Ay, poor lady! she is unfortunate, indeed; and, poor gentleman, he is as jealous as my lady to the full. There has been a deal to do about that picture you mention, sir.

Bev. That will be explained presently: I'll wait till he comes home. I can't possibly go without speaking to him.

Tat. Indeed, you had better not stay, sir. You don't consider the mischief your being in the house may occasion.

Bev. Mischief! how do you mean?

Tat. Lord, sir! I would not have you stay for the world: I would not indeed. You can call again in an hour, sir, and you'll certainly find him at home

then. Bless my heart, fir!—I fancy that's his voice. Do, dear fir! you'll be the ruin of my lady, if he sees you here, fir, waiting in his house: he'll be persuaded you come after my lady; the world will never beat it out of his head.

Bew. But I shall give him to understand——

Tat. He won't understand any thing. Oh lud! oh lud! he's coming up: I'll run and look. [*Exit.*

Bew. What a flurry the woman is in! a foolish jade! I must speak with him now.

Tat. [*Entering.*] It is he as I am alive, fir; and there is a woman in a mask with him.

Bew. A woman in a mask! Zoons, if that should be Belinda! my mind misgives me strangely!

[*Aside.*

Tat. Do, dear fir; you look like a good-natured gentleman; let me hide you out of the way, fir. You would not be the destruction of a poor servant.

Bew. A mask coming home with him! I must know who that is. I won't leave the house without knowing. If I could conceal myself—have you any private place, Mrs. Tattle?

Tat. That is the very thing I mean, fir. Let me conceal you in that closet till he passes through this room. He never stays long here. It won't take you two minutes. Do, sweet fir, I'll down on my knees to you.

Bew. I must know who it is. Come, dispose of me as you will. If this should be Belinda! [*Exit.*

Tat. Heavens bless you, fir, for this goodness! I'll lock the door to make sure work of it. I was never so frightened in my life. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir JOHN, and a Person Masked.

Sir John. Mrs. Marmalet, I am obliged to you for this favour. I wanted a word or two with you.

Mask. So Robert informed me, fir.

Sir John. Did he tell you my business?

Mask. No, fir.

Sir John. Look ye then: if you will gratify me in what I shall ask, you may command any thing. Now you may be uncovered.

Mask. La! fir—I hear a noise: I am afraid somebody's coming: I shall be seen.

Sir John. Hush! no: there's nobody. If you will indulge me on this occasion, I am yours for ever. Here, here is a purse of money for you.

Mask. But if this should come to the knowledge of your lady, I am ruined and undone.

Sir John. No, no, I'll take care of you.

Mask. Will you, fir?

Sir John. I will. But come; let me remove this from your face.

Mask. But somebody may come.

Sir John. I'll lock the door. There, now we are safe.

Mask. But in a little time you'll make up all quarrels with your lady, and I shall be ruined.

Sir John. No, no, never fear: I shall never be reconciled to her: I hate her; I detest her.

Lady Rest. Do you so, fir? [*Unmasking.*] Now, Sir John, what can you say now, fir?

Sir John. My Lady Rattleles! Confusion! what shall I say?

Lady Rest. Oh, Sir John! Sir John! what evasion have you now, sir? Can you deny your guilt any longer?

Sir John. This is unlucky. That villain Robert has betrayed me. I can't explain myself to her now. Try what soothing will do—My Lady Restless, if you will but have patience, this matter shall be explained.

Lady Rest. Explained, sir!

Sir John. Yes, my dear, explained, and——

Lady Rest. My dear, too! the assurance of you!

Sir John. I say, my dear, for I still regard you; and this was all done to—to—cure you of your jealousy: all done to cure you of your jealousy.

Lady Rest. A fine way you have taken!

Sir John. Yes, yes; and so you will see presently: all to convince you how groundless your suspicions are; and then we shall live very happy together.

Lady Rest. Ay!

Sir John. I have no further suspicions of you. I see my error, and I want you to see yours. Ha, ha!—I have no suspicions, that will put her off her guard. [*Aside.*] My dear, compose your spirits, and——

Lady Rest. And do you think to deny every thing even in the face of conviction? Base, base man! I'll go this moment and write to my brother.

Sir John. Now you talk wildly. This is all raving: you make yourself very ridiculous. You do, indeed. I had settled all this on purpose, and contrived that it should come to your ears, and then I knew you would do just as you have done; and—then—I—I resolved to do just as I have done; only to hint to you, that listeners seldom hear any

good of themselves, and to shew you how wrong it is to be too suspicious, my dear: was it not well done?—ha, ha, ha!

Lady Rest. And do you laugh at me too, sir? Make me your sport? I'll go and get pen and ink this moment.

Sir John. Oh! do so, ma'am; do so—ha, ha! you'll only expose yourself: go and write, madam,—ha, ha, ha!—

Lady Rest. I will, sir. [*Going.*] The door is locked. This won't succeed, sir. I suppose you have the key. Ay, I'll lay my life you have, and some one or other of your creatures is locked in there.

Sir John. There again. This is of a piece with all your vain surmises. Ha, ha! you are mighty silly, indeed you are.

Lady Rest. I will search that closet. I am determined I will.

Sir John. Do so, ma'am. do so. Ha, ha! I can't but laugh at her.

Lady Rest. I'll have the door broke open, if you won't give me the key.

Sir John. Ha, ha, ha!—How you expose yourself.

Lady Rest. Will you give me the key, sir?

Sir John. Ha, ha, ha! it is too ridiculous!

Lady Rest. Mighty well, sir. Tattle!—who waits there? I will find out all your artifices. Tattle, I say.

Sir John. Tol de rol lol!—ha, ha, ha!—a silly woman.

Enter TATTLE.

Lady Rest. Do you know any thing of the key of that closet, Tattle?

Tat. The key, ma'am? I have it, ma'am.

Lady Rest. Give it to me.

Tat. That is, I have it not, ma'am. Don't have it, ma'am, don't ask for it. [*Aside to her.*

Lady Rest. Don't ask for it! but I will have it.— Give me the key this instant.

Sir John. How, is she not willing to give it? There is something in this, then. Give the key this moment, you jade, give it to me.

Lady Rest. You sha'n't have it, fir. What, you want to hinder me! give the key to me.

Tat. Dear heart, I have lost it, ma'am.—Better not have it, ma'am. [*Aside.*

Sir John. Give it to me this moment, I say.

Lady Rest. If you don't let me have it, it is as much as your place is worth.

Tat. The devil is in it! there it is then. Let me make my escape. [*Exit.*

Lady Rest. Now fir, we shall see, now, now.

Sir John. Ay, now search, if you will.

[*Laughing at her.*

Lady Rest. [*Unlocking the door.*] You shall be found out, I promise you—Oh! [*Screams out.*

Sir John. What is the matter now?

Lady Rest. Heavens, what have we here?

Sir John. Oh: there is somebody there then.

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. Madam——

[*Bows to her.*

Sir John. By all that's false, here he is again!

Lady Rest. What, in the name of wonder, brings you here, sir?

Sir John. Oh, madam, you know his business, and I know his business; and the gentleman knows his business. There he is, ma'am; there is the gentleman waiting for you; true to his appointment, you see.—Sir, your humble servant. My Lady Restless, your humble servant. Now write to your brother, do. I should be glad to know what you can say now. Now, now; is the case plain now?

Lady Rest. I am in amaze! I don't know what to make of this.

Bev. Sir, however odd this may appear——

Sir John. Ay, now settle it between yourselves: give it what turn you will, sir, she will confirm it. You need not be afraid, sir: you will agree in your story: she is quick of invention, and I dare say you are pretty quick too.

Bev. Sir, I must beg you will put no forced construction upon this matter.

Sir John. And you beg the same, ma'am, don't you?

Bev. Sir, I beg to be heard. My business here is to desire you will return me the picture which you have in your possession. It is now become dear to me, sir.

Sir John. I dare say it is.

Bev. And must be returned.

Sir John. It is of equal value to me. It shall rise in evidence against you both.

Lady Rest. Evidence against me? explain yourself. How did you get in here? What's your busi-

ness? What brought you hither? What's your errand?

Sir John. Ay, fir, speak; how did you get in here? What's your business? What brought you hither? What's your errand?

Bev. Vexation! I am beset by them both at once.

Lady Rest. Speak, fir, explain.

Sir John. Ay, fir, explain.

Bev. Sir, if you will give me leave, I will satisfy you entirely. I assure you, fir, and you too, ma'am, that the liberty I have taken with your closet is entirely owing to your maid, Tattle.

Sir John. The jade! I don't doubt it, fir.

Bev. To prevent, if possible, the interpretation now put upon seeing me in this house.

Sir John. And it was well contrived, fir. Oh, my Lady Restless.

Lady Rest. By all that's just, I knew nothing of it.

Bev. Nothing, upon my honour, fir.

Sir John. Oh, I knew you would both agree.

Bev. As I am a gentleman, I tell you the real fact.

Sir John. You need not, fir; I know the real fact.

Bev. I have no time to lose in frivolous altercation: I must now desire the picture, directly.

Sir John. I wish you a good evening.

Bev. I shall not stir without it. I should be glad you would comply without a quarrel. I must be obliged to——

Sir John. Ay, now her prize-fighter begins. [*Aside.*] I desire you will quit my house, fir.

Bev. I am not to be trifled with. If you don't return it by fair means, I shall be forced to draw.

Sir John. There again now! she has set him on to cut my throat: but I will disappoint her. She is a worthless woman, and I won't fight about her. There, sir, there is your trinket. I shall have proof sufficient without it.

Bev. Upon my honour, sir, you will have no proof of any transgression of mine. If you suspect your lady from these appearances, you wrong her much, I assure you.

Lady Rest. Sir, I desire you will explain all this.

Bev. Call up your maid, madam, and then——

Sir John. No, sir, no more of it. I am satisfied. I wish you good night.

Bev. When you are willing to listen to reason, I shall be ready to convince you of your error. Madam, you may depend I shall do justice to your honour upon all occasions. And now I take my leave.

[*Exit.*]

Sir John. Now, my Lady Restless, now! You are thoroughly known; all your artifices are known; Mr. Beverley is known! my Lord Conquest is known!

Lady Rest. My Lord Conquest, sir! I despise all your imputations. My Lord Conquest's maid, sir! what can you say to that?

Sir John. Very well, madam! 'tis now my turn to write to your brother, and I promise you I will do it.

Lady Rest. You will write, sir, you will write! —Well, his assurance is unequalled. [*Aside.*]—— You will write! That is pleasant indeed.—Write, sir; do; you will only expose your weakness.—

Ha, ha! you make yourself very ridiculous; you do indeed.—Ha, ha!

Sir John. 'Sdeath, madam! am I to be insulted with a contumelious laugh into the bargain?

Lady Rest. Why, my dear, this was all done—to—to—to—cure you of your jealousy; for I knew you would act as you have done, and so I resolved to do as I have done. Was it not well done, my dear? Ha, ha!—

Sir John. Damnation! this is too much: it is beyond all patience.

Lady Rest. Ha, ha, ha! the tables are turned, I think. [Sings and laughs.]

Sir John. Let me tell you, it is no laughing matter. You are a vile woman; I know you, and the world shall know you: I promise you it shall.

Lady Rest. I am clear in my own conviction, and your slander I despise! nor shall your artifices blind me or my friends any longer. Sir, as you say, it is no laughing matter. I promise you, you shall never dishonour me again in this house.

Sir John. And I promise you, madam, that you shall never dishonour me in any house.

Lady Rest. Injurious, false, perfidious man!

Sir John. Deceitful, wanton! wanton woman!

[*Exeunt, at opposite doors.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

An Apartment at Mr. BLANDFORD'S. Enter BELINDA.

Belinda.

UNGENEROUS, false, deceitful Beverley! under that fair appearance could I imagine that he harboured so much treachery? Attached to Lady Restless; engaged in a dishonourable intrigue with the wife of another, and yet professing an affection for me, with ardour professing it, and for me only! He is likely to regard the honour of the marriage-bed, who is ready to commit a trespass on the happiness of his neighbour. It was Providence sent Sir John Restless to pay me a visit. The whole is now brought to light; and, Mr. Beverley, I have done with you for ever. I shall now obey my father's commands. By giving my hand to Sir William Bellmont's son, I shall punish an undeserving libertine for his treachery.

Enter TIPPET.

Belin. Well, Tippet, have you done as I ordered you?

Tip. I have, madam.

Belin. The perfidious man! did you ever know such behaviour?

Tip. He is a traitor, like the rest of them.

Belin. After all the regard I professed for him! after so many ardent vows and protestations as he has made me!

Tip. The hours that he has sighed away at your feet!

Belin. I will banish him from my thoughts. My resolution is fixed, and so I have told my father. Is Sir William Bellmont with him?

Tip. He is, ma'am: they are both in close talk: they are over their glass, and are so overjoyed at the change of your mind.

Belin. And I applaud myself for what I have done.—Oh, Mr. Beverley! you have forced me to this extremity.—Here, take this letter, Tippet, and give it to him with your own hands.

Tip. He shall have it. [*Takes the letter.*]

Belin. Where are all his letters?

Tip. Here, ma'am. [*Shews a parcel.*]

Belin. The bracelets, and the pocket-book?

Tip. I have them safe.

Belin. Very well: take his presents home to him; and, do you hear? Bring me back all the foolish letters I writ to him.

Tip. Never doubt me: I won't quit the house without them. Exchange is all fair.

Belin. That letter will tell him, that though I now break with him in a manner, that may seem abrupt, his character and conduct have compelled me to it. Be sure you confirm that to him.

Tip. He shall hear it all, and roundly too.

Belin. Very well: you may go.—Tippet,—ask his man,—as if from yourself, carelessly,—as it were by accident—whether his master has talked of me? and what he said, Tippet?

Tip. I know Mr. Brush: I can wheedle it out of him, I warrant me.

Belin. Get at the particulars: not that I care: I don't want to know any thing about the ungrateful man. It does not concern me now. My foolish weakness is over: let him care as little for me as I do for him: you may tell him so.

Tip. Your message sha'n't lose in the carrying.

Belin. Well, that's all; you may begone.

Tip. Yes, ma'am.

[*Going.*]

Belin. Mind what I have said.

Tip. You may trust to me.

[*Going.*]

Belin. Don't forget a word of it.

Tip. No, not a syllable.

[*Going.*]

Belin. And hark ye: tell him how easy, how composed I am. That will gail him. You see, Tippet, I am quite unconcerned. [*Forcing a smile.*]

Tip. Yes, ma'am: you don't seem to fret in the least.

Belin. It is easy to perceive that I am not at all disconcerted. You may see how gay I am upon the occasion.

[*Affecting to laugh.*]

Tip. [*Laughing.*] Oh! yes, ma'am: you make quite a laughing matter of it.

Belin. Very true: a perfect air of indifference! —Well, I have done. Tell him that upon no account will I ever exchange a word with him: that I will never hear of him; never think of him; never see him; and never, upon any consideration, admit the smallest intercourse; no, never; I will have no more to do with him.

Tip. I have my lesson, ma'am, and I am glad you are so resolved upon it.

[*Going.*]

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Beverley, madam.

Tip. You must not let him up stairs; my lady will never see his face.

Belin. Yes, I think I may see him; shew him up. I will see him once more, and tell him all myself. It will come better from me, Tippet.

Tip. Yes, ma'am, you will do it with a better grace; and your resolution will melt away like a bit of sugar in your mouth.

Belin. My resolution is not to be altered: you may withdraw, Tippet.

Tip. Yes, ma'am.—Ah! she has a hankering after him still. [Exit.

Belin. I shall now take my leave of him.—But then, my friend Clarissa! can I rob her of her lover? she has not deserved it at my hands. Though Mr. Beverley has deceived me, must I be false to honour, and to friendship?

Enter BEVERLEY.

Bev. Belinda! how gladly do I once again behold—

Belin. And with what resentment have I not reason to behold, sir—

Bev. You have, Belinda; you have reason I grant it: forgive the rash words my folly uttered.

Belin. Mistake me not, sir: it is not your words I quarrel with: your actions, Mr. Beverley, your actions, sir!

Bev. They are not to be extenuated: but surely, after the letter you honoured me with—

Belin. Sir, I have heard every thing since I was guilty of that folly.

Bev. Heard! what?

Belin. Diffemble if you will: but this must be the last of our conversing together. My maid will return you whatever I have received from you: all my silly letters I must desire you to deliver to her; and then visit me no more, sir.

Bev. Belinda! you will not wound me thus. Here is the picture which caused that unlucky mistake between us. I have recovered it from Sir John Restless.

Belin. From my Lady Restless, sir.

Bev. Madam!

Belin. Oh! fie, sir; no more; I have done.

Bev. You must, you must accept it. Thus on my knees I beg you. Will you, Belinda?

[*Takes her hand.*]

Belin. Leave me, sir: let go my hand, Mr. Beverley: your falsehood——

Bev. My falsehood! by all the——

Belin. Your falsehood, sir: Sir John Restless has told me all; every circumstance.

Bev. He has told you! what has he told? his life shall answer it.

Belin. You have destroyed my peace of mind for ever. Nay, you yourself have forced me into the arms of another.

Bev. What do I hear?

Belin. My Lady Restless will rejoice at the news: the event will not be unpleasing to her; but she is welcome: let her enjoy her triumph.

Bev. You astonish me, Belinda: what does all this mean?

Belin. It means, that, in obedience to the commands of a father, I have agreed to marry Mr. Bellmont.

Bev. Mr. Bellmont!—him!—marry him!—it is very well, ma'am: I expected it would come to this, and my Lady Restless is only mentioned on this occasion, as a retort for my accusation about Sir John. I understand it; and, by Heaven! I believe that whole story.

Belin. You do, sir!

Bev. I do: fool that I was to humble myself to you. My pride is now piqued, and I am glad, madam, as glad as you can be, to break off for ever.

Belin. Oh! sir, I can be as indifferent on my part. You have only to send me back my letters, and——

Bev. Agreed, agreed. I'll go home this moment, and send them all. Before I go, madam, here is your own picture; which you had given me with your own hands. Mr. Bellmont will be glad of it; or Sir John Restless will be glad of it; or any body will be glad of it; you need not be at a loss.

Belin. Very like, sir. [*Takes the picture.*] Tyrant, tyrant man! to treat me in this barbarous manner.

[*Cries.*

Bev. Tears! Belinda? [*Approaching.*] Belinda!

Belin. No more of your insidious arts. I will hear no more. Oh! my heart, my heart will break. I did not think it was in your nature to behave as you have done; but—farewell for ever. [*Exit.*

Bev. Belinda! hear me but speak. By Heaven, my Lady Restless—she is gone: 'sdeath, I have been duped by her all this time; I will now summon up all that is man within me, and in my turn despise her.

Enter TIPPET.

Tip. If you are going home, sir, I will take the things with me now.

Bev. Yes, I am going: I will leave this detested—

Tip. This abominable place, sir. [*Laughing at him.*]

Bev. This hell!

Tip. Ha, ha!—ay, sir, this hell.

Bev. This mansion of perfidy, ingratitude, and fraud.

Tip. Very right, sir, let us go.

Bev. And yet—Tippet, you must not stir. Indulge me but a little. It is all a misunderstanding, this.

Tip. My lady will have no more to say to you. You may take the things, sir: my lady resigns them to you, sir.

Bev. Oh! Tippet, use your interest with her. Keep them in the house till I return. I will clear up this whole matter presently. I must not lose her thus. [*Exit.*]

Tip. Poor gentleman! he seems in a lamentable way. Well, I fancy for my part he is a true lover after all; that's what I do; and my young lady, I fear, is—

Enter BELINDA.

Tip. Madam, madam, madam, you are to blame; you are, indeed.

Belin. Is he gone?

Tip. He is, ma'am.

Belin. Did he say any thing? was he uneasy? or did he carry it off with a——

Tip. Oh! madam, he went away sighing short, his heart throbbing, his eyes brimful, his looks pale: you are to blame, you are, indeed, madam. I dare be sworn he has never proved false.

Belin. Oh! Tippet, could I be sure of that!

Tip. But you are not sure of the contrary. Why won't you see my Lady Restless? See her directly, madam; go to her now before it is too late; before the old folks, who are putting their heads together, have settled the whole affair. Dear ma'am, be advised. I hear them coming. They will hurry you into a match, and you'll repent of it. How cruel this is! Here they come.—No, its madam Clarissa.

Enter CLARISSA.

Cla. So, Belinda; you have thrown things into fine confusion. You have involved yourself, and my brother, and Mr. Bellmont, and every body, in most terrible difficulties.

Belin. My dear Clarissa, here have been such doings between your brother and me.

Cla. So I find. I met him as I came hither. You have had fine doings indeed. I have heard the whole; my brother has told me every thing.

Tip. Madam, madam; I hear your father. Sir William Bellmont is with him: they are coming up stairs.

Belin. I am not in a disposition to see them now. Clarissa suspend your judgment; step with me to my own room, and I will then give you such reasons, as, you will own yourself, sufficiently justify my conduct.

Cla. The reasons must be ingenious, that can make any kind of apology for such behaviour: I shall be glad to hear you.

Belin. Very well, follow me quickly. You will find that my resolution is not so rash as you imagine. *[Exit with Clarissa.]*

Tip. They have got into a rare puzzle; and how they will get out of it, is beyond my dexterity; and so let 'em manage as well as they can.

Enter BLANDFORD, Sir WILLIAM, and Young BELLMONT.

Bland. Sir William, we have made a good day's work of it: the writings will be ready to-morrow morning. Where is Belinda? I thought she was in this room.

Tip. She is gone into her own room, sir; she is not well.

Sir Will. She has changed her mind, perhaps: I shall have no faith in this business, till it is all concluded.

Bland. Changed her mind, say you? No, no; I can depend upon her. I'll bring her to you this moment, and you and your son shall hear a declaration of her mind out of her own lips. Tippet, where is Belinda?

Tip. I'll shew you the way, sir.

[Exit with Blandford.]

Sir Will. Now we shall see what authority you have over your daughter. I have your promise, George: if she consents, you will be ready to comply with the wishes of your father.

Bel. Sir,—you may depend, that is as far as matters are in my power: but you know, as I told you already, the lady has a settled rooted aversion to me.

Sir Will. Aversion!—she can change her mind, can't she? Women have no settled principle. They like to-day, and dislike to-morrow. Besides, has not her father promised her to you in marriage? If the old gentleman likes you, what have you to do with her aversion?

Bel. To do with it! A great deal, I am afraid. You are not now to learn, that, when a young lady marries against her inclination, billet-doux, affignations, plots, intrigues, and a terrible *et cetera* of female stratagem, mount into her brain, and the poor husband in the mean time——

Sir Will. Come, lad, don't play the rogue with your father. Did not you promise me, if she made no objection, that there would be no obstacle on your part?

Bel. I promised to be sure, but yet I can't help thinking——

Sir Will. And I can't help thinking, that you know how to equivocate. Look you, George, your words were plain downright English, and I expect that you will perform to the very letter. I have fixed my heart upon this match. Mr. Blandford and I have passed the day at the Crown and Rolls to read over the deeds. I have been dining upon parchment, as I may say. I now tell you, once

for all, you must be observant of my will and pleasure.

Bel. To end all dispute, sir, if the lady—[*Aside.*] She will never consent; I may safely promise.—If the lady, sir, can at once forget her engagements with my friend Beverley——

Sir Will. You will then forget Clarissa: safely spoken. Come, I am satisfied. And now, now we shall see.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Bland. Sir William, give me joy: every thing goes as I wish. My daughter is a complying girl. She is ready to obey my commands. Clarissa is with her, beseeching, wrangling, complaining, soothing; now in a rage, and now in tears; one moment expostulating, and the next imploring; but all in vain; Belinda holds her resolution; and so, young gentleman, you are now completely happy.

Bel. Death to my hopes! can this be true?

[*Aside.*

Bland. Sir William, give me your hand upon it. This will not only be a match of prudence, but of inclination.

Sir Will. There, George, there is news for you! your business is done.

Bland. She owns very frankly that her heart has been hitherto fixed upon a worthless man: she renounces him for ever, and is willing to give her hand as I shall direct.

Bel. What a dilemma am I brought into? [*Aside.*

Sir Will. George, what's the matter, boy? You a bridegroom? Wounds! at your age I could cut a caper over the moon upon such an occasion.

Bel. I am more slack-mettled, sir: I cannot leap quite so high.

Sir Will. A cup too low, I fancy. Let us go and finish our bottle. Belinda shall be my toast. I'll give you her health in a bumper. Come, Mr. Blandford: I want to wash down the cobwebs of the law.

[*Exit.*]

Bland. I attend you, Sir William.—Mr. Bellmont, follow us; we must have your company: you are under par: come, we will raise you a note higher.

[*Exit.*]

Bel. You have sunk me so low, that I shall never recover myself. This behaviour of Belinda's!—Can she think her treachery to one lover will recommend her to another?

Enter CLARISSA.

Cla. Mr. Bellmont, I wish you joy, sir. Belinda has consented; and you have done the same. You are both consenting. The match is a very proper one. You will be finely paired.

Bel. You are misinformed, Clarissa; why will you do me this injustice?

Cla. Injustice! Mr. Blandford has reported every thing: he has done you justice: he has told us how easily you have been persuaded: don't imagine that I am hurt. I resign all pretensions: I can be prevailed upon with as much ease as you, sir: I can copy the easy compliance of Mr. Bellmont.

Bel. If you will but hear me: moderate your anger.

Cla. Anger!—anger indeed! I should be sorry any thing that has happened were of consequence

enough to disturb my peace of mind.—Anger!—I shall die with laughing at the thought. You may be false to your friends, sir; false to your vows; you may break every solemn engagement; Mr. Blandford wishes it; Belinda wishes it; and why should not you comply? Follow the dictates of your own heart, sir.

Bel. Whatever has happened, Clarissa, I am not to blame.

Cla. I dare say not; and here is a lady will say the same.

Enter BELINDA.

Belin. Spare your reproaches, Clarissa.—Mr. Bellmont, you too may spare me. The agitations of my mind distress me so, I know not which way to turn myself. The provocation I have had—

Cla. Provocation, madam!—from whom?

Belin. From your brother: you need not question me; you know what his conduct has been.

Bel. By Heaven you wrong him; and so you will find in the end.

Cla. Your own conduct, madam! will that stand as clear as my brother's? My Lady Restless, I believe, has something to say. It will become you to refute that charge.

Belin. Downright malice, my dear: but I excuse you for the present.

Enter TIPPET.

Tip. [To Belinda.] Your chair is ready, ma'am.

Belin. Very well: I have not a moment to lose: I am determined to know the bottom of this whole

affair. Clarissa, when I return you will be better disposed to hear me.

Cla. You need not trouble yourself, ma'am : I am perfectly satisfied.—Tippet, will you be so good as to order my chair?

Belin. Well; suspend your judgment. This business is of importance: I must leave you now.

[*Exit with Tippet.*]

Bel. Clarissa, if you knew how all this wounds me to the heart.

Cla. Oh! keep your resolution; go on with your very honourable design: inclination should be consulted; and the necessity of the case, you know, will excuse you to the world.

Bel. Command your temper, and the whole shall be explained.

Cla. It wants no explanation: it is too clear already.

Bel. A moment's patience would set every thing right.—'Sdeath! one would imagine that Lady Restless had been speaking to you too. This is like the rest of them: downright jealousy!

Cla. Jealousy!—Upon my word, sir, you are of great consequence to yourself: but you shall find that I can with perfect serenity banish you, and your Belinda, entirely from my thoughts.

Enter TIPPET.

Tip. The chairmen are in the hall, ma'am.

Bel. Let me but speak to you.

Cla. No, sir: I have done: I shall quit this house immediately. [*Going.*] Mrs. Tippet, could you let me have pen, ink, and paper, in your lady's room?

Tip. Every thing is ready there, ma'am.

Cla. Very well:—I'll go and write a letter to Belinda. I'll tell her my mind, and then adieu to all of you. *[Exit with Tippet.*

Bel. How perverse and obstinate!

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir Will. Well, George, every thing is settled.

Bel. Why really, sir, I don't know what to say. I wish you would consider——

Sir Will. At your tricks again?

Bel. I am above an attempt to deceive you: but if all circumstances were known—I am not fond of speaking detractingly of a young lady; but for the honour of your family, sir, let us desist from this match.

Sir Will. Roguery, lad! there's roguery in this.

Bel. I see you will force me to speak out. If there is, unhappily, a flaw in Belinda's reputation——

Sir Will. How?

Bel. This is no time to dissemble. In short, sir, my Lady Restless, a worthy lady here in the neighbourhood, has discovered a connection between her and Sir John Restless; Sir John and Lady Restless lived in perfect harmony till this affair broke out. The peace of the family is now destroyed. The whole is come to the knowledge of my friend Beverley: with tears in his eyes, with a bleeding heart (for he loved Belinda tenderly), he has at last mustered up resolution, and taken his final leave.

Sir Will. Ay! can this be true?

Bel. It is but too true; I am sorry to report it. And now, sir, judge yourself——Oh!——here comes Mr. Blandford: tis a dreadful scene to open to him;

a terrible story for the ear of a father! You had best take no notice: we need not be accessory to a young lady's ruin: it is a family affair, and we may leave them to patch it up among themselves, as well as they can.

Sir Will. If these things are so, why then the case is altered.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Bland. Hey! what's in the wind now? You too look as grave! what's come over you? For my part, my spirits are above proof with joy: I am in love with my daughter for her compliance, and I fancy I shall throw in an odd thousand more, to enliven the honey-moon.

Sir Will. Mr. Blandford, we are rather in a hurry, I think. We had better not precipitate matters.

Bland. Nay, if you are for changing your mind—Look you, sir; my daughter shall not be trifled with.—Where is she? Where is my girl? Who answers there?

Enter TIPPET.

Bland. Where's Belinda?

Tip. She is not gone far, sir; just stepped out upon a moment's business to Sir John Restless.

Sir Will. Gone to Sir John Restless! [*Aside.*

Bel. You see, sir.— [*To Sir William.*

Bland. I did not think she knew Sir John.

Sir Will. Yes, she knows him: she has been acquainted with him for some time past.

Bland. What freak has she got in her head? She is not gone after her Mr. Beverley, I hope. Zook-

ers, this has an odd appearance. I don't like it: I'll follow her this moment.

Sir Will. You are right: I'll attend you.—Now, George, this will explain every thing. [*Aside.*—Come, Mr. Blandford, this may be an escape: young birds will wing their flight.

Bland. Well, well, say no more: we shall see how it is. Come, Sir William: it is but a step.

[*Exit.*

Bel. [*To Tippet.*] Where is Clarissa?

Sir Will. [*Looking back.*] What, loitering, George?

Bel. I follow you, sir. [*Exit Sir William.*] Clarissa is not gone, I hope?

Tip. Gone, sir!—She is writing, and crying, and wiping her eyes, and tearing her paper, and beginning again, and in such a piteous way!

Bel. I must see her: she must come with us. If Lady Restless persists in her story, who knows what turn this affair may take? Come, Mrs. Tippet, shew me the way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Hall in the House of Sir JOHN RESTLESS. A loud rap at the door; and enter ROBERT.

Rob. What a hurry you are in there?—This is my lady, I suppose. Where can she have been?—Now for more confusion. If she finds Madam Belinda with Sir John, we are all blown up again.

Sir JOHN. [*Peeping in.*]

Sir John. Robert, Robert, is that your lady?

Rob. Mercy on us! She is coming, I believe, fir.
—[*Looks out.*] I see her chair: it is my lady.

Sir John. Don't let her know that Belinda is in the house.

Rob. Not if I can help it. Trust to me, fir.
[*Exit Sir John.*] Here she comes. What has she been about?

A Chair is brought into the Hall.

Lady Rest. [*Coming out of the chair.*] Is Sir John at home?

Rob. I fancy he is, my lady.

Lady Rest. Has any body been with him?

Rob. He has been all alone, writing letters in his study: he desired not to be interrupted.

Lady Rest. I shall not interrupt him, I promise him. You never will tell me any thing, Robert: I don't care who comes after him. To-morrow I shall quit this house, and then he may riot in licentious pleasure. If he asks for me, I am not well; I am gone to my own apartment: I hope to see no more of him. [*Going.*]

Chair. Shall your ladyship want the chair any more to-night?

Lady Rest. I don't know what I shall want. Leave the chair there: you may wait. [*Exit.*]

Chair. Ay, always a waiting job. [*Puts the chair aside: Exeunt Chairman and Robert.*]

Enter Sir JOHN and BELINDA.

Belin. If you will but permit me to say a word to her——

Sir John. Excuse me for the present: I beg you will.

Belin. A short interview with Lady Reffless might clear up all my doubts: what objection can you have?

Sir John. A million of objections. You do not know the consequence of being seen in this house. She will interpret every thing her own way. I am unhappy, madam, while you stay.

Belin. There is more cruelty in your refusal than you can imagine. Mr. Beverley's character is in question: it is of the last importance to me to know the whole truth.

Sir John. You know it all, madam. Mr. Beverley's character is too clear. Proofs thicken, and grow stronger every hour. Since the visit I paid you this very day, I have made another discovery. I found him lurking here in my house.

Belin. Found him here, sir?

Sir John. Found him here. He was lying in ambush for another amorous meeting.

Belin. If there is no mistake in this business, —

Sir John. Mistake! May I trust my own eyes? I saw him; I spoke to him; I taxed him with his guilt. He was concealed in her closet; does that amount to proof? Her maid Tattle stationed him there. My lady was privy to it: she favoured the stratagem. Are you satisfied now, madam?

Belin. The particulars of this discovery, Sir John, may convince me; tell me all, sir; you will oblige me.

Sir John. Enquire no more for the present. You will oblige me, madam. Robert shall see you safe home. I would not have my lady find us together: I think I hear her; no, no. In a day or two the

particulars will be known to the wide world. Where is Robert—He shall conduct you home. My peace and happiness require it.

Belin. My peace and happiness are destroyed for ever. If your story be true——

Sir John. It is too true: I wish you a good night. I am miserable while you are here.—Robert!

Belin. Deliver me! I am ruined. I hear my father's voice: what brings him hither? I am undone if he finds me. Let me retire into that room.

Sir John. That room will not do: you will be seen there.

Belin. Can't I go up stairs? [Going.]

Sir John. No; I am ruined, if you go that way. Hell and distraction!—My Lady Restless coming down! Here, madam, here; into that chair. You will be concealed there: nobody will suspect you.

Belin. Any where, sir: put me any where, to avoid this impending storm. [Goes into the chair.]

Sir John. [Shutting the chair.] This is lucky. I am safe now. Let my lady come as soon as she will.

Enter Lady RESTLESS.

Lady Rest. I only wanted to say one word, sir.

Enter BLANDFORD.

Bland. Sir John, I am obliged to intrude: I am told my daughter is here.

Lady Rest. There! he has heard it all.

Bland. I have heard that Belinda came to your house: on what business, I do not know. I hope,

Sir John, that you do not harbour the girl to disturb the peace and happiness of a father.

Sir John. That imputation, sir——

Lady Rest. He does harbour her.

Sir John. Mr. Blandford, I give you my honour——

Lady Rest. I know he does. He has ruined your daughter; he has injured you, sir, as well as me, in the most essential point.

Sir John. She raves; she is mad. If you listen to her——

Enter Sir WILLIAM and BEVERLEY.

Bland. I am glad you are come, Sir William. This is more than I expected.

Sir John. And more than I expected. There, madam, there is your favourite again!

Bev. My visit is public, sir. I come to demand, in the presence of this company, an explanation of the mischief you have done me.

Sir John. You need not be so public, sir. The closet is ready for you: Tattle will turn the key, and you will there be very safe.

Lady Rest. How can you persist in such a fallacy? He knows, he perfectly well knows it was an accident; a mere blunder of the servant, entirely unknown to me.

Sir John. She was privy to the whole.

Bland. This is beside my purpose. I came hither in quest of my daughter: a father demands her. Is she here? Is she in the house?

Sir John. In this house, sir? Our families never visited. I am not acquainted with her.

Lady Rest. He is acquainted with her. I saw him clasp her in his arms.

Bland. In his arms! When? Where? Tell me all.

Lady Rest. Yes, now let him give an account of himself.

Sir John. When you have accounted for your actions, madam——

Lady Rest. Render an account to the lady's father, sir.

Bland. Yes, to her father. Account with me, sir. When and where was all this?

Lady Rest. This very day; at noon; in the park.

Bew. But in the eyes of the whole world: I know Belinda: I can acquit her.

Sir John. And I proclaim her innocence. We can both acquit her. *[Goes up to Beverley.]*

Lady Rest. You are both in a plot: both combined.

Sir John. It was all harmless; all inoffensive. Was not it, Mr. Beverley?

Bew. Yes, all, all.

Lady Rest. All guilt; manifest, downright guilt.

Sir Will. If you all talk together, we shall never understand.

Bew. I understand it all.—Mr. Blandford, you met Belinda in the Park this morning?

Bland. I did, sir.

Bew. You accosted her violently: the harshness of your language overpowered her spirits: she was ready to faint: Sir John was passing by: she was going to drop down: Sir John assisted her: that is the whole of the story. Injured as I am, I must do

justice to Belinda's character. She may treat me with the caprice and pride of insolent beauty; but her virtue claims respect.

Sir John. There now; there! that is the whole of the story.

Lady Rest. The whole of the story! no, Sir John: you shall suppress nothing: you could receive a picture from her.

Sir John. You, madam, could receive a picture; and you, Mr. Beverley, could present it.

Lady Rest. Mr. Beverley, you hear this!

Bev. I can justify you, madam. I gave your lady no picture, Sir John.

Sir John. She had it in her hand. I saw her print her kisses on it, and in that moment I seized it from her.

Bev. Belinda dropt it in the Park, when she was taken ill: I had just given it to her. Your lady found it there.

Lady Rest. I found it on that very spot.

Bev. There, sir; she found it.

Sir John. I found you locked up in her cabinet; concealed in private.

Lady Rest. But with no bad intent.

Sir John. With the worst intent.

Bev. Your jealousy, Sir John, has fixed an imputation upon me; who have not deserved it: and your suspicions, madam, have fallen, like a blasting mildew, upon a lady, whose name was never before sullied by the breath of calumny.

Sir Will. The affair is clear as to your daughter, Mr. Blandford. I am satisfied, and now we need not intrude any longer upon this family.

Enter BELLMONT and CLARISSA.

Walk in, George: every thing is right: your fears may now go to rest.

Lady Rest. I shall not stay another night in this house. Time will explain every thing. Call my chairmen there. Sir John has it his own way at present.

Enter Chairmen.

You have settled this among yourselves. I shall now go to my brother's. Sir John, I have no more to say at present. Hold up.

[Goes to the chair.]

Sir John. Let the chair alone. You shall not go; you shall not quit this house, till I consent.

[Goes between her and the chair.]

Lady Rest. I say hold up.

Sir John. Let it alone.

Lady Rest. Very well, sir: I must be your prisoner, must I?

Sir John. It is mine to command here. No loose escapes this night; no assignations; no intrigues to disgrace me.

Lady Rest. Such inhuman treatment! I am glad there are witnesses of your behaviour.

[Walks away.]

Bland. I am sorry to see all this confusion; but since my daughter is not here——

Lady Rest. He knows where she is, and so you will find.

Sir John. *[Coming forward.]* Your daughter is innocent, sir, I give you my honour. Where

should she be in this house? Lady Restless has occasioned all this mischief. She formed a story to palliate her own misconduct. To her various artifices you are a stranger; but in a few days you may depend——

Lady Rest. [*Aside, as she goes towards the chair.*] He shall find that I am not to be detained here.

[*Makes signs to the Chairmen to hold up.*]

Sir John. I say, gentlemen, you may depend that I have full proof, and in a little time every thing will——

[*The chair is opened, and Belinda comes out.*]

Lady Rest. Who has proof now? There, there! in his house all the time!

Bland. What do I see?

Bew. Belinda here!

Sir Will. So, so! there is something in it, I see.

Sir John. Distraction! this is unlucky.

Lady Rest. What say you now, Mr. Beverley?—Now, Mr. Blandford! there; ocular demonstration for you!

Sir Will. George, take Clarissa as soon as you will. Mr. Blandford, you will excuse me; if I now decline any further treaty with you.

Bland. This abrupt behaviour, Sir William——

Sir Will. I am satisfied, sir. I am resolved. Clarissa, you have my approbation: my son is at your service. Here, George, take her, and be happy.

Bel. [*Taking her hand.*] To you, from this moment, I dedicate all my future days.

Bland. Very well: take your own way. I can still protect my daughter.

Bev. And she deserves your protection: my dear Belinda, explain all this: I know it is in your power.

Belin. This generous behaviour, sir, recalls me to new life. You, I am now convinced, have been accused by my Lady Restless without foundation.—Whatever turn her ladyship's unhappy self-tormenting fancy may give to my conduct, it may provoke a smile, but will excite no other passion.

Lady Rest. Mighty fine! what brought you to this house?

Belin. To be witness of your folly, madam, and Sir John into the bargain.

Bel. That I can vouch: Sir John can fill his mind with vain chimæras, with as apt a disposition as his lady. Beverley has been represented in the falsest colours—

Lady Rest. That I admit: Sir John invented the story.

Bev. And Belinda, madam, has been cruelly slandered by you.

Sir John. She has so: that I admit.

Belin. And my desire to see all this cleared up, brought me to this house, madam. Now you see what has made all this confusion.

Lady Rest. Oh! I expected these airs. You may discuss the point where you please: I will hear no more upon the subject. *[Exit.]*

Bland. Madam, the subject must be settled.

[Follows her.]

Sir John. You have a right to insist upon it. The whole shall be explained this moment. Sir William, you are a dispassionate man. Give us your assistance.

[Exit.]

Sir Will. With all my heart. George, you are no longer concerned in this business, and I am glad of it. [*Exit with young Bellmont.*]

Cl. [*To Beverley.*] Now, brother, now is your time: your difficulties are all removed. Sir John suspected you without reason: my Lady Restless did the same to Belinda: you are both in love, and now may do each other justice. I can satisfy my Lady Restless and your father. [*Exit.*]

Bev. [*Aside.*] I see, I see my rashness.

Belin. [*Aside.*] I have been terribly deceived.

Bev. If she would but forgive my folly.

Belin. Why does not he open his mind to me? I can't speak first.

Bev. What apology can I make her?—Belinda!

Belin. Charming! he begins. [*Aside and smiling.*]

Bev. [*Approaching.*] Belinda!—no answer?—Belinda!

Belin. Mr. Beverley!— [*Smiles aside.*]

Bev. Don't you think you have been very cruel to me, Belinda? [*Advancing towards her.*]

Belin. Don't you think you have been barbarous to me? [*Without looking at him.*]

Bev. I have: I grant it. Can you find in your heart to forgive me?

Belin. [*Without looking at him.*] You have kept me on the rack this whole day, and can you wonder that I feel myself unhappy?

Bev. I am to blame: I acknowledge it. If you knew how my own heart reproaches me, you would spare yourself the trouble. With tears in my eyes I now speak to you: I acknowledge all my errors.

Belin. [*Looking at him.*] These are not tears, Mr. Beverley.

[*Smiling.*]

Bev. They are; you see that they are.

Belin. Ah! you men can command tears.

Bev. My life! my angel! [*Kisses her hand.*] Do you forgive me?

Belin. No; I hate you. [*Looking pleased at him.*]

Bev. Now, I don't believe that. [*Kisses her cheek.*] Do you hate me, Belinda?

Belin. How could you let an extravagance of temper get the better of you? You know the sincerity of my affection. Oh, Mr. Beverley, was it not ungenerous?

Bev. It was; I own it; on my knees, I own it.

Belin. [*Laughing.*] Oh, proud man! have I humbled you?—Since you submit to my will and pleasure, I think I can forgive you. Beg my picture back this moment.

[*Shews it to him.*]

Bev. [*Taking the picture.*] I shall adore it ever, and heal this breach with uninterrupted love.

Enter Sir JOHN, Lady RESTLESS, Sir WILLIAM, BLANDFORD, BELLMONT, and CLARISSA.

Sir John. [*Laughing.*] Why, yes; it is very clear. I can now laugh at my own folly, and my wife's too.

Lady Rest. There has been something of a mistake, I believe.

Bev. You see, Sir John, what your suspicions are come to. I never was within your doors before this day; nor should I, perhaps, have had the honour of speaking to your lady, had it not been for the misunderstanding your mutual jealousies occasioned between Belinda and me.

Bland. And your ladyship has been ingenious enough to work out of those whimsical circumstances a charge against my daughter. Ha, ha!

Sir John. It is ever her way, sir. I told you, my dear, that you would make yourself very ridiculous.

Lady Rest. I fancy, sir, you have not been behind-hand with me. Ha, ha, ha!

Sir Will. And now, Mr. Blandford, I think we may as well let the match go on as we at first intended.

Bland. No, no more of that: you have disposed of your son. Belinda, I no longer oppose your inclinations: take Mr. Beverley as soon as you will.

Sir John. Now let us see: if she agrees to marry him, why then she knows he is innocent, and I shall be satisfied. [*Aside.*

Belin. If you insist upon it, sir.

Bland. I do insist.

Lady Rest. If Beverley accepts of her, all my suspicions are at an end.

Bev. Thus let me take the bright reward of all my wishes. [*Takes her hand.*

Belin. Since it is over, you have used your authority, sir, to make me happy indeed. We have both seen our error, and frankly confess that we have been in the wrong too.

Sir Will. Why, we have been all in the wrong, I think.

Sir John. It has been a day of mistakes, but of fortunate ones, conducing at last to the advantage of all parties. My Lady Restless will now be taught—

Lady Rest. Sir John, I hope you will be taught—
Bland. Never mention what is past. The wrangling of married people about unlucky questions that break out between them, is like the lashing of a top: it only serves to keep it up the longer.

Sir John. Very true: and since we have been ALL IN THE WRONG TO-DAY, we will, for the future, endeavour to be ALL IN THE RIGHT.

Bev. A fair proposal, Sir John: we will make it our business, both you, who are married, and we, who are now entering into that state, by mutual confidence to ensure mutual happiness.

*The God of Love thinks we profane his fire,
When trifles light as air mistrust inspire.
But where esteem and gen'rous passions spring,
There reigns secure, and waves his purple wing;
Gives home-felt peace; prevents the nuptial strife;
Endears the bliss, and bids it last for life.*

[Exeunt omnes.]

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mrs. YATTS.

*BLESS me, this summer-work is so fatiguing !
And then our plays so bustling, so intriguing !
Such missing, -fighing, scolding, all together !
These love affairs suit best with colder weather.
At this warm time these writers shou'd not treat you,
With so much love and passion,—for they'll heat you ;
Poets, like Weavers, should with taste and reason,
Adapt their various goods to ev'ry season.
For the hot months, the fanciful and slight ;
For mind and body, something cool and light :
Authors themselves indeed neglect this rule ;
Dress warm in summer, and at Christmas cool.
I told our Bard within, these five-and plays,
Are rich brocades, unfit for sultry days.
Were you a cook, said I, would you prepare
Large hams, and roasted sirloins for your fare ?
Their very smoke would pall a city glutton ;
A Tragedy would make you all unbutton !
Both appetites now ask for daintier picking,
Farce, pantomime, cold lamb, or white-legged chicken.
At Ranelagh, fine rolls and butter see :
Signor Tenducci, and the best green tea !
Italian singing is as light as feather ;
Beard is too loud, too powerful for this weather !
Vauxhall more solidly regales your palates ;
Champaigne, cantata's, cold boi'd beef, and ballads.*



What shall we do your different tastes to hit?

You relish satire; [To the Pit.] You ragouts of wit;

[Boxes.

Your taste is humour, and high-season'd joke; [1st Gall.

You call for hornpipes, and for Hearts of Oak! [2d Gall.

O could I wish and have!—A conjuring man

Once told my fortune,—and he charm'd this fan!

Said with a flirt I might my will enjoy:

Think you there's magic in this little toy?

I'll try its pow'r; and, if I gain my wish,

I'll give you, sirs, a downright English disb.

*Come then; a song [Music is heard.] indeed! I see
'twill do.*

Take heed, gallants, I'll play the dence with you.

Whene'er I please, I'll charm you to my sight;

And tear a FAN WITH FLIRTING ev'ry night.

Enter two BALLAD SINGERS, who sing the following Song.

S O N G.

YE Critics above, and ye Critics below.

Ye finer spun Critics, who keep the mid row,

O tarry a moment, I'll sing you a song,

Shall prove that, like us, you are all in the wrong.

Ye Poets, who mount on the fam'd winged steed,

Of prancing, and wincing, and kicking take heed:

For when by those hornets, the Critics, you're stung,

You're thrown in the dirt, and are all in the wrong.

*Ye Actors, who act what these writers have writ,
Pray stick to your Poet, and spare your own wit;
For when with your own you unbridle your tongue,
I'll hold ten to one you are all in the wrong.*

*Ye Knaves, who make news for the foolish to read,
Who print daily slanders the hungry to feed:
For a-while you mislead 'em, the news-hunting throng,
Till the pillory proves, you are all in the wrong.*

*Ye grave Politicians, so deep and so wise,
With your hums, and your sbrugs, and your uplifted eyes,
The road that you travel, is tedious and long,
But I pray you jog on; you are all in the wrong.*

*Ye happy fond husbands, and fond happy wives,
Let never suspicion embitter your lives;
Let your prudence be stout, and your faith be as strong;
Who watch, or who catch, they are all in the wrong.*

*Ye unmarried folks be not bought, or be sold,
Let age avoid youth, and the young ones the old;
For they'll soon get together, the young with the young,
And then, my wise old ones, you're all in the wrong.*

*Ye soldiers and sailors, who bravely have fought,
Who honour and glory, and laurels have bought;
Let your foes but appear, you'll be at 'em ding dong,
And if they come near you, they're all in the wrong.*

*Ye judges of taste to our labours be kind,
Our errors are many, pray wink, or be blind;
Still find your way hither to glad us each night,
And our note we will change to you're all in the right.*

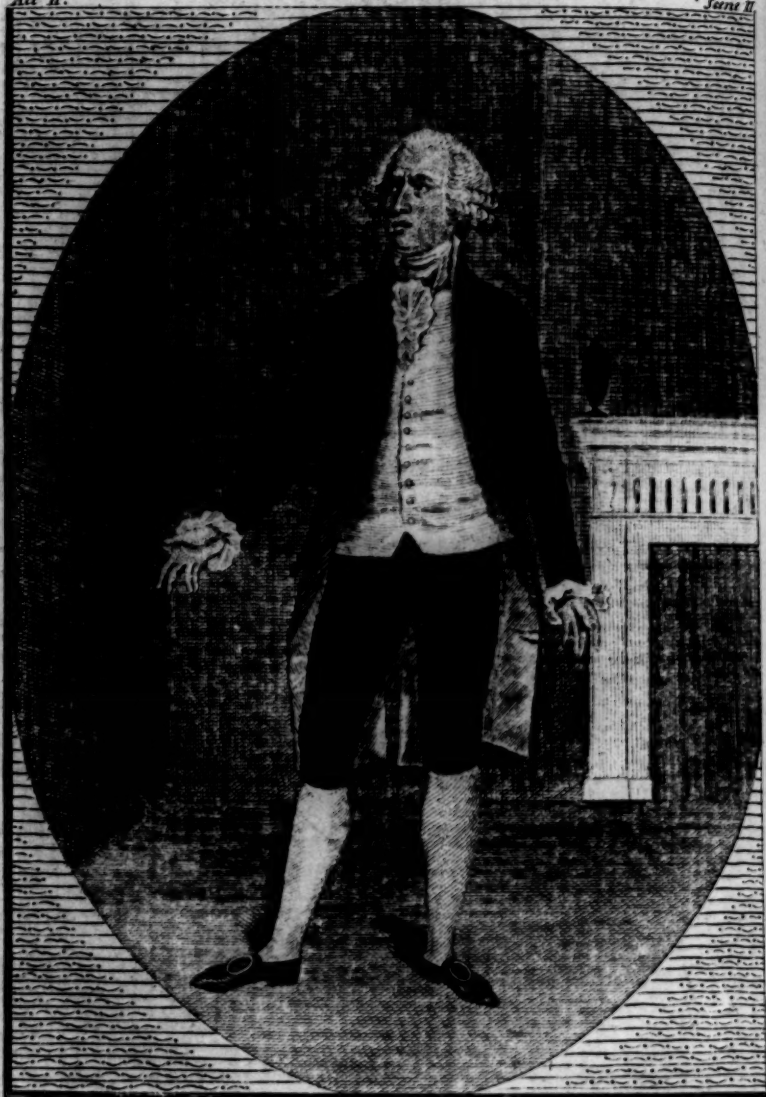




THE JEALOUS WIFE.

Act II.

Scene II.



De Witte pinx.

Ferguson sculp.

MR. BENSLEY as OAKLY.

*Lord this is the strangest Misapprehension!
I am quite astonished.*

Dublin Published by W. Jones, N° 86, Dame Street.



THE JEALOUS WIFE.

Only let her alone I say I won't have
 Act V. her touch'd.

Burney del.

Reynolds sculp.

Dublin Published by W. Jones, N^o. 26 Dame Street.



THE
JEALOUS WIFE.

A
COMEDY.

BY GEORGE COLMAN.

[Single
Works]

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRES-ROYAL,
DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS.

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY J. CHAMBERS,
FOR WILLIAM JONES, No. 86, DAME-STREET.

M DCC XCV.

JEALOUS WIFE

COMEDY

BY GEORGE COLMAN THE ELDER



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE use that has been made in this comedy of Fielding's admirable novel of Tom Jones, must be obvious to the most ordinary reader. Some hints have also been taken from the account of Mr. and Mrs. Freeman, in No. 212, and No. 216, of the Spectator; and the short scene of Charles's intoxication, at the end of the third act, is partly an imitation of the behaviour of Syrus, much in the same circumstances, in the Adelphi of Terence. There are also some traces of the character of the Jealous Wife, in one of the latter papers of the Connoisseur.

It would be unjust, indeed, to omit mentioning my obligations to Mr. Garrick. To his inspection the comedy was submitted in its first rude state; and to my care and attention to follow his advice in many particulars, relating both to the fable and characters, I know that I am much indebted for the reception which this piece has met with from the public.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY MR. LLOYD.

Spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

*THE Jealous Wife! a comedy! poor man!
A charming subject! but a wretched plan.
His skittish wit, o'erleaping the due bound,
Commits flat trespass upon tragic ground.
Quarrels, upbraidings, jealousies, and spleen,
Grow too familiar in the comic scene.
Tinge but the language with heroic chime,
'Tis passion, pathos, character, sublime!
What round big words had swell'd the pompous scent,
A king the husband, and the wife a queen!
Then might distraction rend her graceful hair,
See fightless forms, and scream, and gape, and stare.
Draw canstir Death had rag'd without controul,
Here the drawn dagger, there the poison'd bowl.
What eyes had stream'd at all the whining woe!
What hands had thunder'd at each Hah! and Oh!*

*But peace! the gentle prologue custom sends,
Like drum and serjeant, to beat up for friends.
At vice and folly, each a lawful game,
Our author flies, but with no partial aim.
He read the manners, open as they lie
In Nature's volume to the general eye.*

PROLOGUE.

*Books too be read, nor blush'd to use their store—
He does but what his betters did before.
Shakespere has done it, and the Grecian stage
Caught truth of character from Homer's page.*

*If in his scenes an honest skill is shewn,
And borrowing little, much appears his own;
If what a master's happy penoil drew
He brings more forward in dramatic view;
To your decision he submits his cause,
Secure of candour, anxious for applause.*

*But if, all rude, his artless scenes deface
The simple beauties which he meant to grace,
If, an invader upon others land,
He spoil and plunder with a robber's hand,
Do justice on him!—As on fools before,
And give to Blockheads past one Blockhead more.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DRURY-LANE.

		Men.
OAKLY,	-	Mr. Bensley.
Major OAKLY,	-	Mr. Baddeley.
CHARLES,	-	Mr. Barrymore.
RUSSET,	-	Mr. Aickin.
Sir HARRY BEAGLE,	-	Mr. R. Palmer.
Lord TRINKET,	-	Mr. Dodd.
Captain O'CUTTER,	-	Mr. Moody.
PARIS,	-	Mr. Maddocks.
WILLIAM,	-	Mr. Phillimore.
JOHN,	-	Mr. Webb.
TOM,	-	Mr. Alfred.
Servant to Lady Free love,	-	Mr. Lyons.
		Women.
Mrs. OAKLY,	-	Miss Farren.
Lady FREE LOVE,	-	Mrs. Hopkins.
HARRIOT,	-	Mrs. Kemble.
TOILET,	-	Miss Tidswell.
Chambermaid,	-	Mrs. Heard.

COVENT-GARDEN.

		Men.
OAKLY,	-	Mr. Farren.
Major OAKLY,	-	Mr. Ryder.
CHARLES,	-	Mr. Macready.
RUSSET,	-	Mr. Fearon.
Sir HARRY BEAGLE,	-	Mr. Edwin.
Lord TRINKET,	-	Mr. Lewis.
Captain O'CUTTER,	-	Mr. Aickin.
PARIS,	-	Mr. Wewitzer.
WILLIAM,	-	Mr. Ledger.
JOHN,	-	Mr. Evatt.
TOM,	-	Mr. Rock.
Servant to Lady Free love,	-	Mr. Lee.
		Women.
Mrs. OAKLY,	-	Mrs. Pope.
Lady FREE LOVE,	-	Mrs. Bernard.
HARRIOT,	-	Mrs. Merry.
TOILET,	-	Miss Stuart.
Chambermaid,	-	Miss Brangin.

THE
JEALOUS WIFE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Room in OAKLY's House. Noise heard within.

Mrs. Oakly, within.

DON'T tell me—I know it is so—It's monstrous,
and I will not bear it.

Oak. [Within.] But, my dear!—

Mrs. Oak. Nay, nay, &c. *[Squabbling within.]*

Enter Mrs. OAKLY, with a Letter, OAKLY following.

Mrs. Oak. Say what you will, Mr. Oakly, you
shall never persuade me, but this is some filthy in-
trigue of yours.

Oak. I can assure you, my love!—

Mrs. Oak. Your love!—Don't I know your—
Tell me, I say, this instant, every circumstance re-
lating to this letter.

Oak. How can I tell you, when you will not so
much as let me see it?

Mrs. Oak. Look you, Mr. Oakly, this usage is
not to be borne. You take a pleasure in abusing
my tenderness and soft disposition.—To be perpetu-
ally running over the whole town, nay, the whole

kingdom too, in pursuit of your amours!—Did not I discover that you was great with mademoiselle, my own woman?—Did not you contract a shameful familiarity with Mrs. Freeman?—Did not I detect your intrigue with my Lady Wealthy?—Was not you——

Oak. Oons! madam, the Grand Turk himself has not half so many mistresses—You throw me out of all patience—Do I know any body but our common friends?—Am I visited by any body, that does not visit you?—Do I ever go out, unless you go with me?—And am I not as constantly by your side, as if I was tied to your apron-strings?

Mrs. Oak. Go, go, you are a false man——Have not I found you out a thousand times? And have not I this moment a letter in my hand, which convinces me of your baseness?—Let me know the whole affair, or I will——

Oak. Let you know? Let me know what you would have of me——You stop my letter before it comes to my hands, and then expect that I shou'd know the contents of it.

Mrs. Oak. Heaven be praised! I stop't it.—I suspected some of these doings for some time past—But the letter informs me who she is, and I'll be revenged on her sufficiently. Oh, you base man, you!

Oak. I beg, my dear, that you would moderate your passion!—Shew me the letter, and I'll convince you of my innocence.

Mrs. Oak. Innocence!——Abominable!——Innocence!——But I am not to be made such a fool.—I am convinced of your perfidy, and very sure that——

Oak. 'Sdeath and fire! your passion hurries you out of your senses—Will you hear me?

Mrs. Oak. No, you are a base man; and I will not hear you.

Oak. Why then, my dear, since you will neither talk reasonably yourself, nor listen to reason from me, I shall take my leave till you are in a better humour. So, your servant! *[Going.]*

Mrs. Oak. Ay, go, you cruel man!—Go to your mistresses, and leave your poor wife to her miseries. —How unfortunate a woman am I!—I could die with vexation—— *[Throwing herself into a chair.]*

Oak. There it is—Now dare not I stir a step further—If I offer to go, she is in one of her fits in an instant—Never sure was woman at once of so violent and so delicate a constitution! What shall I say to sooth her? Nay, never make thyself so uneasy, my dear—Come, come, you know I love you. Nay, nay, you shall be convinced.

Mrs. Oak. I know you hate me; and that your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me.

[Whining.]

Oak. Do not vex yourself at this rate—I love you most passionately—Indeed I do—This must be some mistake.

Mrs. Oak. O, I am an unhappy woman! *[Weeping.]*

Oak. Dry up thy tears, my love, and be comforted! You will find that I am not to blame in this matter—Come, let me see this letter—Nay, you shall not deny me. *[Taking the letter.]*

Mrs. Oak. There! take it, you know the hand, I am sure.

Oak. To Charles Oakly, Esq. [*Reading.*]—Hand! 'Tis a clerk-like hand, indeed! a good round text! and was certainly never penned by a fair lady.

Mrs. Oak. Ay, laugh at me, do!

Oak. Forgive me, my love, I did not mean to laugh at thee——But what says the letter?—
[*Reading.*] *Daughter eloped—you must be privy to it—
—scandalous—dishonourable—satisfaction—revenge—
um, um, um—injured father.*

HENRY RUSSET.

Mrs. Oak. [*Rising.*] Well, fir—you see I have detected you——Tell me this instant where she is concealed.

Oak. So—so—so—This hurts me—I'm shock'd—

[*To himself.*

Mrs. Oak. What, are you confounded with your guilt? Have I caught you at last?

Oak. O that wicked Charles! To decoy a young lady from her parents in the country! The profligacy of the young fellows of this age is abominable.

[*To himself.*

Mrs. Oak. [*Half aside and musing.*] Charles!—Let me see!—Charles!—No! Impossible. This is all a trick.

Oak. He has certainly ruined this poor lady.

[*To himself.*

Mrs. Oak. Art! art! all art! There's a sudden turn now! You have ready wit for an intrigue, I find.

Oak. Such an abandoned action! I wish I had never had the care of him.

[*To himself.*

Mrs. Oak. Mighty fine, Mr. Oakly! Go on, fir, go on! I see what you mean.—Your assurance

provokes me beyond your very falsehood itself. So you imagine, sir, that this affected concern, this flimsy pretence about Charles, is to bring you off. Matchless confidence! But I am armed against every thing—I am prepared for all your dark schemes: I am aware of all your low stratagems.

Oak. See there now! Was ever any thing so provoking? To persevere in your ridiculous——For Heaven's sake, my dear, don't distract me. When you see my mind thus agitated and uneasy, that a young fellow, whom his dying father, my own brother, committed to my care, should be guilty of such enormous wickedness; I say, when you are witness of my distress on this occasion, how can you be weak enough and cruel enough to——

Mrs. Oak. Prodigious! well, sir! You do it very well. Nay, keep it up, carry it on, there's nothing like going through with it. O you artful creature! But, sir, I am not to be so easily satisfied. I do not believe a syllable of all this——Give me the letter—*[Snatching the letter.]*——You shall sorely repent this vile business, for I am resolved that I will know the bottom of it. *[Exit.]*

Oak. This is beyond all patience. Provoking woman! Her absurd suspicions interpret every thing the wrong way. She delights to make me wretched, because she sees I am attached to her, and converts my tenderness and affection into the instruments of my own torture. But this ungracious boy! In how many troubles will he involve his own and his lady's family——I never imagined that he was of such abandon'd principles. O, here he comes!

Enter Major OAKLY, and CHARLES.

Char. Good-morrow, sir!

Maj. Good-morrow, brother, good-morrow!—What, you have been at the old work, I find. I heard you—ding! dong! i'faith!—She has rung a noble peal in your ears. But how now? Why sure you've had a remarkable warm bout on't.—You seem more ruffled than usual.

Oak. I am, indeed, brother! Thanks to that young gentleman there. Have a care, Charles! you may be called to a severe account for this. The honour of a family, sir, is no such light matter.

Char. Sir!

Maj. Hey-day! What, has a curtain-lecture produced a lecture of morality? What is all this?

Oak. To a profligate mind, perhaps, these things may appear agreeable in the beginning. But don't you tremble at the consequences?

Char. I see, sir, that you are displeased with me, but I am quite at a loss to guess at the occasion.

Oak. Tell me, sir!—where is Miss Harriot Ruffet?

Char. Miss Harriot Ruffet!—Sir—Explain.

Oak. Have not you decoy'd her from her father?

Char. I!—Decoy'd her—Decoy'd my Harriot!—I would sooner die than do her the least injury.—What can this mean?

Maj. I believe the young dog has been at her, after all.

Oak. I was in hopes, Charles, you had better principles. But there's a letter just come from her father——

Char. A letter!—What letter? Dear sir, give it me. Some intelligence of my Harriot, Major!—The letter, sir, the letter this moment, for Heaven's sake!

Oak. If this warmth, Charles, tends to prove your innocence——

Char. Dear sir, excuse me—I'll prove any thing—Let me but see this letter, and I'll——

Oak. Let you see it?——I could hardly get a sight of it myself. Mrs. Oakly has it.

Char. Has she got it? Major, I'll be with you again directly. *[Exit hastily.]*

Maj. Hey-day! The devil's in the boy! What a fiery set of people! By my troth, I think the whole family is made of nothing but combustibles.

Oak. I like this emotion. It looks well. It may serve too to convince my wife of the folly of her suspicions. Wou'd to Heaven I could quiet them for ever!

Maj. Why, pray now, my dear naughty brother, what heinous offence have you committed this morning? What new cause of suspicion? You have been asking one of the maids to mend your ruffle, I suppose, or have been hanging your head out of the window, when a pretty young woman has past by, or——

Oak. How can you trifle with my distresses, Major? Did not I tell you it was about a letter?

Maj. A letter!—hum!—A suspicious circumstance, to be sure! What, and the seal a true lover's knot now, hey! or an heart transfixt with darts; or possibly the wax bore the industrious impression of a thimble; or perhaps the folds were lovingly connected by a wafer, pricked with a pin,

and the direction written in a vile scrawl, and not a word spelt as it should be; ha, ha, ha!

Oak. Pooh! brother—Whatever it was, the letter, you find, was for Charles, and not for me—this outrageous jealousy is the devil.

Maj. Mere matrimonial blessings and domestic comfort, brother! jealousy is a certain sign of love.

Oak. Love! it is this very love that hath made us both so miserable. Her love for me has confined me to my house, like a state prisoner, without the liberty of seeing my friends, or the use of pen, ink, and paper; while my love for her has made such a fool of me, that I have never had the spirit to contradict her.

Maj. Ay, ay, there you've hit it; Mrs. Oakly would make an excellent wife, if you did but know how to manage her.

Oak. You are a rare fellow, indeed, to talk of managing a wife—A debauch'd bachelor—a rattle-brain'd, rioting fellow—who have pick'd up your common-place notions of women in bagnios, taverns, and the camp; whose most refined commerce with the sex has been in order to delude country girls at your quarters, or to besiege the virtue of abigails, milliners, or mantua-maker's 'prentices.

Maj. So much the better!—so much the better! women are all alike in the main, brother, high or low, married or single, quality or no quality. I have found them so, from a duchess down to a milk-maid.

Oak. Your savage notions are ridiculous. What do you know of a husband's feelings?—You, who

comprise all your qualities in your *honour*, as you call it!—Dead to all sentiments of delicacy, and incapable of any but the grossest attachments to women. This is your boasted refinement, your thorough knowledge of the world, while with regard to women, one poor train of thinking, one narrow set of ideas, like the uniform of the regiment, serves the whole corps.

Maj. Very fine, brother!—there's common-place for you with a vengeance. Henceforth, expect no quarter from me. I tell you again and again, I know the sex better than you do. They all love to give themselves airs, and to have power: every woman is a tyrant at the bottom. But they could never make a fool of me.—No, no! no woman should ever domineer over me, let her be mistress or wife.

Oak. Single men can be no judges in these cases. They must happen in all families. But when things are driven to extremities—to see a woman in uneasiness—a woman one loves too—one's wife—who can withstand it? You neither speak nor think like a man that has lov'd, and been married, major!

Maj. I wish I could hear a married man speak my language—I'm a bachelor, it's true; but I am no bad judge of your case for all that. I know yours and Mrs. Oakly's disposition to a hair. She is all impetuosity and fire—A very magazine of touchwood and gunpowder. You are hot enough too upon occasion, but then it's over in an instant. In comes love and conjugal affection, as you call it:—that is, mere folly and weakness—and you draw off your forces, just when you shou'd pursue

the attack, and follow your advantage. Have at her with spirit, and the day's your own, brother!

Oak. I tell you, brother, you mistake the matter. Sulkiness, fits, tears!—These, and such as these, are the things which make a feeling man uneasy. Her passion and violence have not half such an effect on me.

Maj. Why, then, you may be sure, she'll play that upon you, which she finds does most execution. But you must be proof against every thing. If she's furious, set passion against passion; if you find her at her tricks, play off art against art, and foil her at her own weapons. That's your game, brother!

Oak. Why, what would you have me do?

Maj. Do as you please, for one month, whether she likes it or not; and, I'll answer for it, she will consent you shall do as you please all her life after.

Oak. This is fine talking. You do not consider the difficulty that——

Maj. You must overcome all difficulties. Assert your right boldly, man! give your own orders to servants, and see they observe them; read your own letters, and never let her have a sight of them; make your own appointments, and never be persuaded to break them; see what company you like; go out when you please; return when you please, and don't suffer yourself to be called to account where you have been. In short, do but shew yourself a man of spirit, leave off whining about love and tenderness, and nonsense, and the business is done, brother!

Oak. I believe you are in the right, major! I see you're in the right. I'll do it, I'll certainly do it.—

But then it hurts me to the soul, to think what uneasiness I shall give her. The first opening of my design will throw her into fits, and the pursuit of it perhaps may be fatal.

Maj. Fits! ha, ha, ha!—Fits!—I'll engage to cure her of her fits. Nobody understands hysterical cases better than I do: besides, my sister's symptoms are not very dangerous. Did you ever hear of her falling into a fit when you was not by?—Was she ever found in convulsions in her closet?—No, no, these fits, the more care you take of them, the more you will increase the distemper: let them alone, and they will wear themselves out, I warrant you.

Oak. True—very true—you're certainly in the right—I'll follow your advice. Where do you dine to-day? I'll order the coach, and go with you.

Maj. O brave! keep up this spirit, and you're made for ever.

Oak. You shall see now, major! Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Order the coach directly. I shall dine out to-day.

Serv. The coach, sir?—Now? Sir!

Oak. Ay, now, immediately.

Serv. Now? Sir!—the—the—coach! Sir!—that is—my mistress—

Oak. Sirrah! do as you're bid. Bid them put to this instant.

Serv. Ye—yes, sir—yes, sir. [Exit.]

Oak. Well, where shall we dine?

Maj. At the St. Alban's, or where you will. This is excellent, if you do but hold it.

Oak. I will have my own way, I am determined.

Maj. That's right.

Oak. I am steel.

Maj. Bravo!

Oak. Adamant.

Maj. Bravissimo!

Oak. Just what you'd have me.

Maj. Why that's well said. But *will* you do it?

Oak. I will.

Maj. You won't.

Oak. I will. I'll be a fool to her no longer. But hark ye, major! my hat and sword lie in my study. I'll go and steal them out, while she is busy talking with Charles.

Maj. Steal them! for shame! Pr'ythee take them boldly, call for them, make them bring them to you here, and go out with spirit, in the face of your whole family.

Oak. No, no—you are wrong—let her rave after I am gone, and when I return, you know, I shall exert myself with more propriety, after this open affront to her authority.

Maj. Well, take your own way.

Oak. Ay, ay—let me manage it, let me manage it. [Exit.

Maj. Manage it! ay, to be sure, you're a rare manager! It is dangerous, they say, to meddle between man and wife. I am no great favourite of Mrs. Oakly's already; and in a week's time I expect to have the door shut in my teeth.

Enter CHARLES.

How now, Charles, what news?

Char. Ruin'd and undone! she's gone, uncle! my Harriot's lost for ever.

Maj. Gone off with a man?—I thought so: they are all alike.

Char. O no! Fled to avoid that hateful match with Sir Harry Beagle.

Maj. Faith a girl of spirit!—Joy! Charles, I give you joy: she is your own, my boy!—A fool and a great estate! Devilish strong temptations!

Char. A wretch! I was sure she would never think of him.

Maj. No! to be sure! commend me to your modesty! Refuse five thousand a year, and a baronet, for pretty Mr. Charles Oakly! it is true, indeed, that the looby has not a single idea in his head besides a hound, a hunter, a five-barred gate, and a horse-race; but then he's rich, and that will qualify his absurdities. Money is a wonderful improver of the understanding.—But whence comes all this intelligence?

Char. In an angry letter from her father.—How miserable I am! If I had not offended my Harriot, much offended her by that foolish riot and drinking at your house in the country, she would certainly, at such a time, have taken refuge in my arms.

Maj. A very agreeable refuge for a young lady to be sure, and extremely decent!

Char. I am all uneasiness. Did not she tell me, that she trembled at the thoughts of having trusted her affections with a man of such a wild disposition? What a heap of extravagancies was I guilty of?

Maj. Extravagancies with a witness! Ah, you silly young dog, you would ruin yourself with her

father, in spite of all I could do. There you sat, as drunk as a lord, telling the old gentleman the whole affair, and swearing you would drive Sir Harry Beagle out of the country, though I kept winking and nodding, pulling you by the sleeve, and kicking your shins under the table, in hopes of stopping you, but all to no purpose.

Char. What distress may she be in at this instant! Alone and defenceless!—Where? Where can she be?

Maj. What relations or friends has she in town?

Char. Relations! let me see.—Faith! I have it.—If she is in town, ten to one but she is at her aunt's, Lady Freelove's. I'll go thither immediately.

Maj. Lady Freelove's! Hold, hold, Charles!—do you know her ladyship?

Char. Not much; but I'll break through all forms to get to my Harriot.

Maj. I do know her ladyship.

Char. Well, and what do you know of her?

Maj. O nothing!—Her ladyship is a woman of the world, that's all—she'll introduce Harriot to the best company.

Char. What do you mean?

Maj. Yes, yes, I would trust a wife, or a daughter, or a mistress with Lady Freelove, to be sure!—I'll tell you what, Charles! you're a good boy, but you don't know the world. Women are fifty times oftener ruined by their acquaintance with each other, than by their attachment to men. One thorough-paced lady will train up a thousand novices. That Lady Freelove is an arrant—By the

bye, did not she, last summer, make formal proposals to Harriot's father from Lord Trinket?

Char. Yes! but they were received with the utmost contempt. The old gentleman, it seems, hates a lord, and he told her so in plain terms.

Maj. Such an aversion to the nobility may not run in the blood. The girl, I warrant you, has no objection. However, if she's there, watch her narrowly, Charles! Lady Freelove is as mischievous as a monkey, and as cunning too.—Have a care of her. I say, have a care of her.

Char. If she's there, I'll have her out of the house within this half hour, or set fire to it.

Maj. Nay, now you're too violent.—Stay a moment, and we'll consider what's best to be done.

Re-enter OAKLY.

Oak. Come, is the coach ready? Let us be gone. Does Charles go with us?

Char. I go with you!—What can I do? I am so vexed and distracted, and so many thoughts crowd in upon me, I don't know which way to turn myself.

Mrs. Oak. [*Within.*] The coach!—dines out!—where is your master?

Oak. Zounds! brother, here she is!

Enter Mrs. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. Pray, Mr. Oakly, what is the matter you cannot dine at home to-day?

Oak. Don't be uneasy, my dear!—I have a little business to settle with my brother; so I am only just going to dinner with him and Charles to the tavern.

Mrs. Oak. Why cannot you settle your business here as well as at a tavern? But it is some of your ladies business, I suppose, and so you must get rid of my company.—This is chiefly your fault Major Oakly!

Maj. Lord! sister, what signifies it, whether a man dines at home or abroad? [Coolly,

Mrs. Oak. It signifies a great deal, sir! and I don't choose——

Maj. Phoo! let him go, my dear sister, let him go! he will be ten times better company when he comes back. I tell you what, sister—you sit at home till you are quite tired of one another, and then you grow cross, and fall out. If you would but part a little now and then, you might meet again in good humour.

Mrs. Oak. I beg, Major Oakly, that you would trouble yourself about your own affairs; and let me tell you, sir, that I——

Oak. Nay, do not put thyself into a passion with the Major, my dear!—It is not his fault; and I shall come back to thee very soon.

Mrs. Oak. Come back!—why need you go out?—I know well enough when you mean to deceive me: for then there is always a pretence of dining with Sir John, or my Lord, or somebody; but when you tell me, that you are going to a tavern, it's such a bare-faced affront——

Oak. This is so strange now!—Why, my dear, I shall only just——

Mrs. Oak. Only just go after the lady in the letter, I suppose.

Oak. Well, well, I won't go then.—Will that convince you?—I'll stay with you, my dear!—will that satisfy you?

Maj. For shame! hold out, if you are a man.

[*Apart.*

Oak. She has been so much vext this morning already, I must humour her a little now. [*Apart.*

Maj. Fie, fie! go out, or you're undone.

[*Apart.*

Oak. You see it's impossible—— [*Apart.*
[*To Mrs. Oakly.*] I'll dine at home with thee, my love.

Mrs. Oak. Ay, ay, pray do, sir.—Dine at a tavern indeed! [*Going.*

Oak. [*Returning.*] You may depend on me another time, Major.

Maj. Steel and adamant!—Ah!

Mrs. Oak. [*Returning.*] Mr. Oakly.

Oak. O, my dear! [*Exeunt Mr. and Mrs. Oakly.*

Maj. Ha, ha, ha! there's a picture of resolution! there goes a philosopher for you! ha! Charles!

Char. O, uncle! I have no spirits to laugh now.

Maj. So! I have a fine time on't between you and my brother. Will you meet me to dinner at the St. Alban's by four? We'll drink her health, and think of this affair.

Char. Don't depend on me. I shall be running all over the town in pursuit of my Harriot. I have been considering what you have said, but at all events I'll go directly to Lady Free love's. If I find her not there, which way I shall direct myself, Heaven knows.

Maj. Hark'e, Charles! If you meet with her, you may be at a loss. Bring her to my house. I have a snug room, and——

Char. Phoo! pr'ythee, uncle, don't trifle with me now.

Maj. Well, seriously then, my house is at your service.

Char. I thank you: but I must be gone.

Maj. Ay, ay, bring her to my house, and we'll settle the whole affair for you. You shall clap her into a post-chaise, take the chaplain of our regiment along with you, wheel her down to Scotland, and when you come back, send to settle her fortune with her father: that's the modern art of making love, Charles!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Room in the Bull and Gate Inn. Enter Sir HARRY BEAGLE and TOM.

Sir Harry.

TEN guineas a mare, and a crown the man? hey, Tom!

Tom. Yes, your honour.

Sir H. And are you sure, Tom, that there is no flaw in his blood?

Tom. He's a good thing, sir, and as little beholden to the ground, as any horse that ever went over the turf upon four legs. Why, here's his whole pedigree, your honour!

Sir H. Is it attested?

Tom. Very well attested: it is signed by Jack Spur, and my Lord Startall. [*Giving the Pedigree.*]

Sir H. Let me see—[*Reading.*—] Tom—come—tickle-me was out of the famous Tantwivy mare, by Sir Aaron Driver's chesnut horse White Stockings. White Stockings his dam was got by Lord Hedge's South Barb, full sister to the Proserpine Filley, and his sire Tom Jones; his grandam was the Irish Dutcheß, and his grandfire 'Squire Sportly's Trajan; his great grandam, and great, great grandam, were Newmarket Peggy and Black Moll, and his great grandfire, and great, great grandfire, were Sir Ralph Whip's Regulus, and the famous Prince Anamaboo.

his

JOHN X SPUR.

mark.

STARTAL.

Tom. All fine horses, and won every thing! a foal out of your honour's Bald-fac'd Venus, by this horse, would beat the world.

Sir H. Well then, we'll think on't—But, pox on't, Tom, I have certainly knock'd up my little roan gelding, in this damn'd wild goose chase of threescore miles an end.

Tom. He's deadly blown to be sure, your honour; and I am afraid we are upon a wrong scent after all. Madam Harriot certainly took across the country, instead of coming on to London.

Sir H. No, no, we traced her all the way up.—But d'ye hear, Tom, look out among the stables and repositories here in town, for a smart road nag, and a strong horse to carry a portmanteau.

Tom. Sir Roger Turf's horses are to be sold—I'll see if there's ever a tight thing there—but I suppose, sir, you would have one somewhat stronger than Snip—I don't think he's quite enough of a horse for your honour.

Sir H. Not enough of a horse! Snip's a powerful gelding; master of two stone more than my weight. If Snip stands sound, I would not take a hundred guineas for him. Poor Snip! go into the stable, Tom, see they give him a warm mash, and look at his heels and his eyes.—But where's Mr. Ruffet all this while?

Tom. I left the 'squire at breakfast on a cold pigeon-pye, and enquiring after madam Harriot in the kitchen. I'll let him know your honour would be glad to see him here.

Sir H. Ay, do: but hark'e, Tom, be sure you take care of Snip.

Tom. I'll warrant your honour.

Sir H. I'll be down in the stables myself by and by. [*Exit Tom.*] Let me see——out of the famous Tantwivy by White Stockings; White Stockings, his dam, full sister to the Proserpine Filley, and his sire—pox on't, how unlucky it is, that this damn'd accident should happen in the Newmarket week!—ten to one I lose my match with Lord Choakjade, by not riding myself, and I shall have no opportunity to hedge my bets neither——what a damn'd piece of work have I made on't!—I have knock'd up poor Snip, shall lose my match, and as to Harriot, why, the odds are, that I lose my match there too—a skittish young tit! If I once get her tight in hand, I'll make her wince for it.—Her

estate join'd to my own, I would have the finest stud, and the noblest kennel in the whole country. —But here comes her father, puffing and blowing, like a broken-winded horse up hill.

Enter RUSSET.

Ruf. Well, Sir Harry, have you heard any thing of her?

Sir H. Yes, I have been asking Tom about her, and he says, you may have her for five hundred guineas.

Ruf. Five hundred guineas! how d'ye mean? where is she? which way did she take?

Sir H. Why, first she went to Epsom, then to Lincoln, then to Nottingham, and now she is at York.

Ruf. Impossible! she could not go over half the ground in the time. What the devil are you talking of?

Sir H. Of the mare you was just now saying you wanted to buy.

Ruf. The devil take the mare! —who would think of her, when I am mad about an affair of so much more consequence?

Sir H. You seemed mad about her a little while ago. She's a fine mare, and a thing of shape and blood.

Ruf. Damn her blood! —Harriot! my dear provoking Harriot! Where can she be? Have you got any intelligence of her?

Sir H. No, faith, not I: we seem to be quite thrown out here—but however I have ordered Tom to try if he can hear any thing of her among the ostlers.

Ruf. Why don't you enquire after her yourself? why don't you run up and down the whole town after her?—t'other young rascal knows where she is, I warrant you.—What a plague it is to have a daughter! When one loves her to distraction, and has toil'd and labour'd to make her happy, the ungrateful slut will sooner go to hell her own way—but she shall have him—I will make her happy, if I break her heart for it.—A provoking gipfy!—to run away, and torment her poor father, that dotes on her! I'll never see her face again.—Sir Harry, how can we get any intelligence of her? Why don't you speak! why don't you tell me?—Zounds! you seem as indifferent as if you did not care a farthing about her.

Sir H. Indifferent! you may well call me indifferent!—this damn'd chase after her will cost me a thousand—if it had not been for her, I would not have been off the course this week, to have sav'd the lives of my whole family—I'll hold you fix to two that—

Ruf. Zounds! hold your tongue, or talk more to the purpose—I swear, she is too good for you—you don't deserve such a wife—a fine, dear, sweet, lovely, charming girl!—She'll break my heart.—How shall I find her out?—Do, pr'ythee, Sir Harry, my dear honest friend, consider how we may discover where she is fled to.

Sir H. Suppose you put an advertisement into the news-papers, describing her marks, her age, her height, and where she strayed from. I recover'd a bay mare once by that method.

Ruf. Advertise her!—What! describe my daughter and expose her in the public papers, with a reward for bringing her home, like horses stolen or stray'd!—recovered a bay mare!—the devil's in the fellow!—he thinks of nothing but racers, and bay mares, and stallions.——'Sdeath I wish your——

Sir H. I wish Harriot was fairly pounded; it would save us both a deal of trouble.

Ruf. Which way shall I turn myself?—I am half distracted.—If I go to that young dog's house, he has certainly conveyed her somewhere out of my reach—if she does not send to me to-day, I'll give her up for ever—perhaps though, she may have met with some accident, and has nobody to assist her.—No, she is certainly with that young rascal.—I wish she was dead, and I was dead—I'll blow young Oakly's brains out.

Enter Tom.

Sir H. Well, Tom, how is poor Snip?

Tom. A little better, sir, after his warm mash: but Lady, the pointing bitch that followed you all the way, is deadly foot-fore.

Ruf. Damn Snip and Lady!—have you heard any thing of Harriot?

Tom. Why I came on purpose to let my master and your honour know, that John Ostler says as how, just such a lady as I told him madam Harriot was, came here in a four-wheel chaise, and was fetch'd away soon after by a fine lady in a chariot.

Ruf. Did she come alone?

Tom. Quite alone, only a servant-maid, please your honour.

Raf. And what part of the town did they go to?

Tom. John Ostler says as-how, they bid the coachman drive to Grosvenor-square.

Sir H. Soho! pufs—Yoics!

Ruf. She is certainly gone to that young rogue—he has got his aunt to fetch her from hence—or else she is with her own aunt Lady Freelove—they both live in that part of the town. I'll go to his house, and in the mean while, Sir Harry, you shall step to Lady Freelove's. We'll find her, I warrant you. I'll teach my young mistress to be gadding. She shall marry you to-night. Come along, Sir Harry, come along; we won't lose a minute. Come along.

Sir H. Soho! hark forward! wind 'em and cross 'em! hark forward! Yoics! Yoics! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Changes to OAKLY'S. Enter Mrs. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. After all, that letter was certainly intended for my husband. I see plain enough they are all in a plot against me. My husband intriguing, the major working him up to affront me, Charles owning his letters, and so playing into each other's hands.—They think me a fool, I find—but I'll be too much for them yet.—I have desired to speak with Mr. Oakly, and expect him here immediately. His temper is naturally open, and if he thinks my anger abated, and my suspicions

laid asleep, he will certainly betray himself by his behaviour. I'll assume an air of good-humour, pretend to believe the fine story they have trumped up, throw him off his guard, and so draw the secret out of him.—Here he comes.—How hard it is for to dissemble one's anger! O, I could rate him soundly! but I'll keep down my indignation at present, though it chokes me.

Enter OAKLY.

O my dear! I am very glad to see you. Pray sit down. [*They sit.*] I longed to see you. It seemed an age till I had an opportunity of talking over the silly affair that happened this morning. [*Mildly.*

Oak. Why really, my dear——

Mrs. Oak. Nay, don't look so grave now. Come—it's all over. Charles and you have cleared up matters. I am satisfied.

Oak. Indeed! I rejoice to hear it! You make me happy beyond my expectation. This disposition will insure our felicity. Do but lay aside your cruel unjust suspicion, and we should never have the least difference.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed I begin to think so. I'll endeavour to get the better of it. And really sometimes it is very ridiculous. My uneasiness this morning, for instance! ha, ha, ha! To be so much alarmed about that idle letter, which turned out quite another thing at last—was not I very angry with you? ha, ha, ha! [*Affecting a laugh.*

Oak. Don't mention it. Let us both forget it. Your present cheerfulness makes amends for every thing.

Mrs. Oak. I am apt to be too violent: I love you too well to be quite easy about you. [*Fondly.*]—Well—no matter—what is become of Charles?

Oak. Poor fellow! he is on the wing, rambling all over the town in pursuit of this young lady.

Mrs. Oak. Where is he gone, pray?

Oak. First of all, I believe, to some of her relations.

Mrs. Oak. Relations! Who are they? Where do they live?

Oak. There is an aunt of her's lives just in the neighbourhood; Lady Freelove.

Mrs. Oak. Lady Freelove! Oh! gone to Lady Freelove's, is he?—and do you think he will hear any thing of her?

Oak. I don't know; but I hope so with all my soul.

Mrs. Oak. Hope! with all your soul; do you hope so? [*Alarmed.*]

Oak. Hope so! ye—yes—why don't you hope so? [*Surprised.*]

Mrs. Oak. Well—yes—[*Recovering.*]—O ay, to be sure. I hope it of all things. You know, my dear, it must give me great satisfaction; as well as yourself, to see Charles well settled.

Oak. I should think so; and really I don't know where he can be settled so well. She is a most deserving young woman, I assure you.

Mrs. Oak. You are well acquainted with her then?

Oak. To be sure, my dear! after seeing her so often last summer at the Major's house in the country, and at her father's.

Mrs. Oak. So often!

Oak. O ay, very often—Charles took care of that—almost every day.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed! But pray—a—a—a—I say
—a—a— [Confused.]

Oak. What do you say to my dear!

Mrs. Oak. I say—a—a—[Stammering.] Is she handsome?

Oak. Prodigiouſly handsome indeed.

Mrs. Oak. Prodigiouſly handsome! and is she reckoned a sensible girl?

Oak. A very sensible, modest, agreeable young lady as ever I knew. You would be extremely fond of her, I am sure. You can't imagine how happy I was in her company. Poor Charles! she soon made a conquest of him, and no wonder, she has so many elegant accomplishments! such an infinite fund of cheerfulness and good humour! Why, she's the darling of the whole country.

Mrs. Oak. Lord! you seem quite in raptures about her.

Oak. Raptures!—not at all. I was only telling you the young lady's character. I thought you would be glad to find that Charles had made so sensible a choice, and was so likely to be happy.

Mrs. Oak. O, Charles! True, as you say, Charles will be mighty happy.

Oak. Don't you think so?

Mrs. Oak. I am convinced of it. Poor Charles! I am much concern'd for him. He must be very uneasy about her. I was thinking whether we could be of any service to him in this affair.

Oak. Was you, my love? that is very good of you. Why, to be sure, we must endeavour to af-

fit him. Let me see? How can we manage it? Gad! I have hit it. The luckiest thought! and it will be of great service to Charles.

Mrs. Oak. Well, what is it? [*Eagerly.*]—Your know I would do any thing to serve Charles; and oblige you. [*Mildly.*

Oak. That is so kind! Lord, my dear, if you would but always consider things in this proper light, and continue this amiable temper, we should be the happiest people——

Mrs. Oak. I believe so; but what's your proposal?

Oak. I am sure you'll like it.——Charles, you know, may perhaps be so lucky as to meet with this lady.——

Mrs. Oak. True.

Oak. Now I was thinking, that he might, with your leave, my dear——

Mrs. Oak. Well!

Oak. Bring her home here——

Mrs. Oak. How!

Oak. Yes, bring her home here, my dear!—it will make poor Charles's mind quite easy: and you may take her under your protection till her father comes to town.

Mrs. Oak. Amazing! this is even beyond my expectation.

Oak. Why!——what!——

Mrs. Oak. Was there ever such assurance? Take her under my protection! What! would you keep [her under my nose?

Oak. Nay, I never conceiv'd—I thought you [would have approv'd——

Mrs. Oak. What! make me your convenient woman!—No place but my own house to serve your purposes?

Oak. Lord, this is the strangest misapprehension! I am quite astonished.

Mrs. Oak. Astonished! yes—confused, detected, betrayed by your vain confidence of imposing on me. Why, sure you imagine me an idiot, a driveller. Charles, indeed! yes, Charles is a fine excuse for you. The letter this morning, the letter, Mr. Oakly!

Oak. The letter! why sure that——

Mrs. Oak. Is sufficiently explained. You have made it very clear to me. Now I am convinced. I have no doubt of your perfidy. But I thank you for some hints you have given me, and you may be sure I shall make use of them: nor will I rest, till I have full conviction, and overwhelm you with the strongest proof of your baseness towards me.

Oak. Nay, but——

Mrs. Oak. Go, go! I have no doubt of your falsehood: away! [Exit *Mrs. Oakly.*

Oak. Was there even any thing like this? Such unaccountable behaviour! angry I don't know why! jealous of I know not what! pretending to be satisfied merely to draw me in, and then creating imaginary proofs out of an innocent conversation!——Hints!——hints I have given her!—What can she mean?——

TOILET crossing the Stage.

Toilet! where are you going?

Toilet. To order the porter to let in no company to my lady to-day. She won't see a single soul, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Oak. What an unhappy woman! Now will she sit all day feeding on her suspicions, till she has convinced herself of the truth of them.

JOHN crossing the Stage.

Well, sir, what's your business?

John. Going to order the chariot, sir!—my lady's going out immediately.

[*Exit.*]

Oak. Going out! what is all this?—But every way she makes me miserable. Wild and ungovernable as the sea or the wind! made up of storms and tempests! I can't bear it: and one way or other I will put an end to it.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Lady FREELOVE's House—Enter Lady FREELOVE with a card—Servant following.

L. Free. [*Reading as she enters.*]

—And will take the liberty of waiting on her ladyship *en cavalier*, as he comes from the *menéage*. Does any body wait that brought this card?

Serv. Lord Trinket's servant is in the hall, madam.

L. Free. My compliments, and I shall be glad to see his lordship.—Where is Miss Ruffet?

Serv. In her own chamber, madam.

L. Free. What is she doing?

Serv. Writing, I believe, madam.

L. Free. Oh! ridiculous!—scribbling to that Oakly, I suppose. [*Apart.*—Let her know I should be glad of her company here. [*Exit Servant.*

L. Free. It is a mighty troublesome thing to manage a simple girl, that knows nothing of the world. Harriot, like all other girls, is foolishly fond of this young fellow of her own choosing, her first love, that is to say, the first man that is particularly civil, and the first air of consequence which a young lady gives herself. Poor silly soul!—But Oakly must not have her positively. A match with Lord Trinket will add to the dignity of the family. I must bring her into it. I will throw her into his way as often as possible, and leave him to make his party good as fast as he can. But here she comes.

Enter HARRIOT.

Well! Harriot, still in the pouts! nay, pr'ythee, my dear little run-away girl, be more cheerful! your everlasting melancholy puts me into the vapours.

Har. Dear madam, excuse me. How can I be cheerful in my present situation? I know my father's temper so well, that I am sure this step of mine must almost distract him. I sometimes wish that I had remained in the country, let what would have been the consequence.

L. Free. Why, it is a naughty child, that's certain; but it need not be so uneasy about papa, as you know that I wrote by last night's post to acquaint him that his little lost sheep was safe, and that you are ready to obey his commands in every particular, except marrying that oaf, Sir Harry Beagle.—Lord! lord! what a difference there

is between a country and town education! Why, a London lass would have jumped out of a window into a gallant's arms, and without thinking of her father, unless it were to have drawn a few bills on him, been an hundred miles off in nine or ten hours, or perhaps out of the kingdom in twenty-four.

Har. I fear I have already been too precipitate. I tremble for the consequences.

L. Free. I swear, child, you are a downright prude. Your way of talking gives me the spleen; so full of affection, and duty, and virtue, 'tis just like a funeral sermon. And yet, pretty soul! it can love.—Well, I wonder at your taste; a sneaking simple gentleman! without a title! and when to my knowledge you might have a man of quality to-morrow.

Har. Perhaps so. Your ladyship must excuse me, but many a man of quality would make me miserable.

L. Free. Indeed, my dear, these antideluvian notions will never do now a-days; and at the same time too, those little wicked eyes of yours speak a very different language. Indeed you have fine eyes, child! And they have made fine work with Lord Trinket.

Har. Lord Trinket! [*Contemptuously.*]

L. Free. Yes, Lord Trinket: you know it as well as I do, and yet, you ill-natured thing, you will not vouchsafe him a single smile. But you must give the poor soul a little encouragement, pr'ythee do.

Har. Indeed I cann't, madam, for of all mankind Lord Trinket is my aversion.

L. Free. Why so? child! He is counted a well-bred, sensible young fellow, and the women all think him handsome.

Har. Yes, he is just polite enough to be able to be very unmannerly with a great deal of good breeding; is just handsome enough to make him most excessively vain of his person; and has just reflection enough to finish him for a coxcomb; qualifications, which are all very common among those whom your ladyship calls men of quality.

L. Free. A satirist too! Indeed, my dear, this affectation sits very awkwardly upon you. There will be a superiority in the behaviour of persons of fashion.

Har. A superiority, indeed! for his lordship always behaves with so much insolent familiarity, that I should almost imagine he was soliciting me for other favours, rather than to pass my whole life with him.

L. Free. Innocent freedoms, child, which every fine woman expects to be taken with her, as an acknowledgment of her beauty.

Har. They are freedoms, which, I think, no innocent woman can allow.

L. Free. Romantic to the last degree!—Why you are in the country still, Harriot!

Enter Servant.

Serv. My Lord Trinket, madam! [*Exit Servant.*]

L. Free. I swear now I have a good mind to tell him all you have said.

Enter Lord TRINKET in boots, &c. as from the Riding-House.

Your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

L. Trin. Your ladyship does me too much honour. Here I am *en bottine* as you see,—just come from the menège. Miss Ruffet, I am your slave. I declare it makes me quite happy to find you together. 'Pon honour, madam, [*To Harriot.*] I begin to conceive great hopes of you: and as for you, Lady Freelove, I cannot sufficiently commend your assiduity with your fair pupil. She was before possessed of every grace that nature could bestow on her, and nobody is so well qualified as your ladyship to give her the *Bon Ton*.

Har. Compliment and contempt all in a breath! My lord, I am obliged to you. But waving my acknowledgments, give me leave to ask your lordship, whether nature and the *Bon Ton* (as you call it) are so different, that we must give up one in order to obtain the other.

L. Trin. Totally opposite, madam. The chief aim of the *Bon Ton* is to render persons of family different from the vulgar, for whom indeed nature serves very well. For this reason it has, at various times, been ungenteel to see, to hear, to walk, to be in good health, and to have twenty other horrible perfections of nature. Nature indeed may do very well sometimes. It made you, for instance, and it then made something very lovely; and if you would suffer us of quality to give you the *Ton*, you would be absolutely divine: but now—me—madam—me—nature never made such a thing as me.

Har. Why, indeed, I think your lordship has very few obligations to her.

L. Trink. Then you really think it's all my own? I declare now that is a mighty genteel compliment. Nay, if you begin to flatter already, you improve apace. 'Pon honour, Lady Freelove, I believe we shall make something of her at last.

L. Free. No doubt on't. It is in your lordship's power to make her a complete woman of fashion at once.

L. Trink. Hum! why, ay—

Har. Your lordship must excuse me. I am of a very tasteless disposition. I shall never bear to be carried out of nature.

L. Free. You are out of nature now, Harriot! I am sure no woman but yourself ever objected to being carried among persons of quality. Would you believe it? my lord! here has she been a whole week in town, and would never suffer me to introduce her to a rout, an assembly, a concert, or even to court, or to the opera; nay, would hardly so much as mix with a living soul that has visited me.

L. Trink. No wonder, madam, you do not adopt the manners of persons of fashion, when you will not even honour them with your company. Were you to make one in our little coteries, we should soon make you sick of the boors and bumkins of the horrid country. By the bye, I met a monster at the riding-house this morning, who gave me some intelligence, that will surprise you, concerning your family.

Har. What intelligence?

L. Free. Who was this monster, as your lordship calls him? A curiosity, I dare say.

L. Trink. This monster, madam, was formerly my head groom, and had the care of all my running horses, but growing most abominably surly and extravagant, as you know all these fellows do, I turned him off; and ever since my brother Slouch Trinket has had the care of my stud, rides all my principal matches himself, and——

Har. Dear my lord, don't talk of your groom and your brother, but tell me the news. Do you know any thing of my father?

L. Trin. Your father, madam, is now in town: This fellow, you must know, is now groom to Sir Harry Beagle, your sweet rural swain, and informed me, that his master and your father were running all over the town in quest of you; and that he himself had orders to enquire after you; for which reason, I suppose, he came to the riding-house stables, to look after a horse, thinking it, to be sure, a very likely place to meet you. Your father, perhaps, is gone to seek you at the Tower, or Westminster Abbey, which is all the idea he has of London; and your faithful lover is probably cheapening a hunter, and drinking strong beer at the Horse and Jockey in Smithfield.

L. Free. The whole set admirably disposed of!

Har. Did not your lordship inform him where I was?

L. Trink. Not I, 'pon honour, madam; that I left to their own ingenuity to discover.

L. Free. And pray, my lord, where in this town have this polite company bestowed themselves?

L. Trink. They lodge, madam, of all places in the world, at the Bull and Gate Inn, in Holborn.

L. Free. Ha, ha, ha! The Bull and Gate! Incomparable! What, have they brought any hay or cattle to town?

L. Trink. Very well, Lady Freelove, very well, indeed!—There they are, like so many graziers; and there, it seems, they have learned that this lady is certainly in London.

Har. Do, dear madam, send a card directly to my father, informing him where I am, and that your ladyship would be glad to see him here. For my part, I dare not venture into his presence till you have, in some measure, pacified him; but, for Heaven's sake, desire him not to bring that wretched fellow along with him.

L. Trink. Wretched fellow! Oho! *Courage, Miller Trinket!* [*Aside.*]

L. Free. I'll send immediately. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Serv. [*Apart to L. Freelove.*] Sir Harry Beagle is below, madam.

L. Free. [*Apart to Serv.*] I am not at home.—Have they let him in?

Serv. Yes, madam.

L. Free. How abominably unlucky this is! Well, then shew him into my dressing-room. I will come to him there. [*Exit Serv.*]

L. Trink. Lady Freelove! No engagement, I hope. We won't part with you, 'pon honour.

L. Free. The worst engagement in the world. A pair of musty old prudes! Lady Formal and Miss Prate.

L. Trink. O the beldams! As nauseous as ipecacuanha, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Lud! lud! what shall I do with them? Why do these foolish women come troubling me now? I must wait on them in the dressing-room, and you must excuse the card, Harriot, till they are gone. I'll dispatch them as soon as I can, but Heaven knows when I shall get rid of them, for they are both everlasting gossips; though the words come from her ladyship one by one, like drops from a still, while the other tiresome woman overwhelms us with a flood of impertinence. Harriot, you'll entertain his lordship till I return. [*Exit.*]

L. Trink. Gone!—'Egad, my affairs here begin to grow very critical,—the father in town!—lover in town!—Surrounded by enemies!—What shall I do?—[*To Harriot.*] I have nothing for it but a *coup de main*. 'Pon honour, I am not sorry for the coming in of these old tabbies, and am much obliged to her ladyship for leaving us such an agreeable tête-à-tête.

Har. Your lordship will find me extremely bad company.

L. Trink. Not in the least, my dear! We'll entertain ourselves one way or other, I'll warrant you.—'Egad, I think it a mighty good opportunity to establish a better acquaintance with you.

Har. I don't understand you.

L. Trink. No?—Why then I'll speak plainer.—[*Pausing and looking her full in the face.*] You are an amazing fine creature, 'pon honour.

Har. If this be your lordship's polite conversation, I shall leave you to amuse yourself in soliloquy.

[*Going.*]

L. Trink. No, no, no, madam, that must not be. [*Stopping her.*] This place, my passion, the opportunity, all conspire——

Har. How, sir! you don't intend to do me any violence.

L. Trink. 'Pon honour, ma'am, it will be doing great violence to myself if I do not. You must excuse me. [*Struggling with her.*]

Har. Help! help! murder! help!

L. Trink. Your yelping will signify nothing; nobody will come. [*Struggling.*]

Har. For Heaven's sake!—Sir! My lord!——

[*Noise within.*]

L. Trink. Pox on't, what noise!—Then I must be quick. [*Still struggling.*]

Har. Help! murder! help! help!

Enter CHARLES hastily.

Char. What do I hear? My Harriot's voice calling for help? Ha! [*Seeing them.*] Is it possible? Turn ruffian!—I'll find you employment.

[*Drawing.*]

L. Trink. You are a most impertinent scoundrel, and I'll whip you through the lungs, 'pon honour.

[*They fight, Harriot runs out screaming help, &c.*]

Enter Lady FREELOVE, Sir HARRY BRAGLE, and Servants.

L. Free. How's this?—Swords drawn in my house!—Part them—[*They are parted.*] This is the most impudent thing.

L. Trink. Well, rascal, I shall find a time, I know you, sir!

Char. The sooner the better, I know your lordship too.

Sir H. I'faith, madam, [*To L. Free.*] we had like to have been in at the death.

L. Free. What is all this? Pray, sir, what is the meaning of your coming hither to raise this disturbance? Do you take my house for a brothel?

[*To Charles.*

Char. Not I, indeed, madam! but I believe his lordship does.

L. Trink. Impudent scoundrell!

L. Free. Your conversation, sir, is as insolent as your behaviour. Who are you? What brought you here?

Char. I am one, madam, always ready to draw my sword in defence of innocence in distress, and more especially in the cause of that lady I delivered from his lordship's fury: in search of whom I troubled your ladyship's house.

L. Free. Her lover, I suppose, or what?

Char. At your ladyship's service; though not quite so violent in my passion as his lordship there.

L. Trink. Impertinent rascal!

L. Free. You shall be made to repent of this insolence.

L. Trink. Your ladyship may leave that to me.

Char. Ha! ha!

Sir H. But pray what is become of the lady all this while? Why, Lady Freelove, you told me she was not here, and, i'faith, I was just drawing off another way, if I had not heard the view-halloo.

L. Free. You shall see her immediately, sir!
Who's there?

Enter a Servant.

Where is Miss Ruffet?

Serv. Gone out, madam.

L. Free. Gone out! where?

Serv. I don't know, madam: but she ran down the back stairs crying for help, crossed the servants hall in tears, and took a chair at the door.

L. Free. Blockheads! To let her go out in a chair alone!—Go, and enquire after her immediately. *[Exit Servant.]*

Sir H. Gone! What a pox had I just run her down, and is the little puss stole away at last?

L. Free. Sir, if you will walk in *[To Sir Har.]* with his lordship and me, perhaps you may hear some tidings of her; though it is most probable she may be gone to her father. I don't know any other friend she has in town.

Char. I am heartily glad she is gone. She is safer any where than in this house.

L. Free. Mighty well, sir!—My lord! Sir Harry!—I attend you.

L. Trink. You shall hear from me, sir!

[To Charles.]

Char. Very well, my lord.

Sir H. Stole away!—Pox on't—stole away.

[Exeunt Sir H. and Lord Trink.]

L. Free. Before I follow the company, give me leave to tell you, sir, that your behaviour here has been so extraordinary.

Char. My treatment here, madam, has indeed been very extraordinary.

L. Free. Indeed!—Well—no matter—permit me to acquaint you, fir, that there lies your way out, and that the greatest favour you can do me, is to leave the house immediately.

Char. That your ladyship may depend on. Since you have put miss Ruffet to flight, you may be sure of not being troubled with my company. I'll after her immediately—I can't rest till I know what is become of her.

L. Free. If she has any regard for her reputation, she'll never put herself into such hands as yours.

Char. O, madam, there can be no doubt of her regard for that, by her leaving your ladyship.

L. Free. Leave my house.

Char. Directly.—A charming house! and a charming lady of the house too! Ha, ha, ha!

L. Free. Vulgar fellow!

Char. Fine lady! [*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Lady FREELove's House. Enter Lady FREELove, and Lord TRINKET.

Lord Trinket.

*D*oucement, Doucement, my dear Lady Freelove! Excuse me! I meant no harm, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Indeed, indeed, my Lord Trinket, this is absolutely intolerable. What, to offer rudeness to a young lady in my house! What will the world say of it?

L. Trink. Just what the world pleases.—It does not signify a doit what they say.—However, I ask pardon; but, 'egad, I thought it was the best way.

L. Free. For shame, for shame, my lord! I am quite hurt at your want of discretion. Leave the whole conduct of this affair to me, or I'll have done with it at once. How strangely you have acted! There I went out of the way on purpose to serve you, by keeping off that looby Sir Harry Beagle, and preventing him or her father from seeing the girl, till we had some chance of managing her ourselves.—And then you chose to make a disturbance, and spoiled all.

L. Trink. Devil take Sir Harry and t'other scoundrel too!—That they should come driving hither just at so critical an instant!—And that the wild little thing should take wing, and fly away the lord knows whither!

L. Free. Ay,—And there again you was indiscreet past redemption. To let her know, that her father was in town, and where he was to be found too! For there I am confident she must be gone, as she is not acquainted with one creature in London.

L. Trink. Why a father is in these cases the *pis-aller* I must confess. 'Pon honour, Lady Freelove, I can scarce believe this obstinate girl a relation of yours. Such narrow notions! I'll swear, there is less trouble in getting ten women of the *premiere volée*, than in conquering the scruples of a silly girl in that stile of life.

L. Free. Come, come, my lord, a truce with your reflections on my niece! Let us consider what is best to be done.

L. Trink. E'en just what your ladyship thinks proper.—For my part, I am entirely *dérangée*.

L. Free. Will you submit to be governed by me then?

L. Trink. I'll be all obedience——your ladyship's slave, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Why then, as this is rather an ugly affair in regard to me, as well as your lordship, and may make some noise, I think it absolutely necessary, merely to save appearances, that you should wait on her father, palliate matters as well as you can, and make a formal repetition of your proposal of marriage.

L. Trink. Your ladyship is perfectly in the right.—You are quite *au fait* of the affair. It shall be done immediately, and then your reputation will be safe, and my conduct justified to all the world.—But should the old rustic continue as stubborn as his daughter, your ladyship, I hope, has no objections to my being a little *rufée*, for I must have her, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Not in the least.

L. Trink. Or if a good opportunity should offer, and the girl should be still untractable——

L. Free. Do what you will, I wash my hands of it. She's out of my care now, you know.—But you must beware your rivals. One, you know, is in the house with her, and the other will lose no opportunities of getting to her.

L. Trink. As to the fighting gentleman, I shall cut out work for him in his own way. I'll send him a *petit billet* to-morrow morning, and then there can be no great difficulty in outwitting her bunkin father, and the baronet.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Captain O'Cutter to wait on your ladyship.

L. Free. O the hideous fellow! The Irish failorman, for whom I prevailed on your lordship to get the post of regulating captain. I suppose he is come to load me with his odious thanks. I won't be troubled with him now.

L. Trink. Let him in, by all means. He is the best creature to laugh at in nature. He is a perfect sea-monster, and always looks and talks as if he was upon deck. Besides, a thought strikes me.—He may be of use.

L. Free. Well—send the creature up then.

[*Exit Servant.*]

But what fine thought is this?

L. Trink. A *coup de maitre*, 'pon honour! I intend—but hush! Here the porpus comes.

Enter Captain O'CUTTER.

L. Free. Captain, your humble servant! I am very glad to see you.

O'Cut. I am much obliged to you, my lady! Upon my conscience, the wind favours me at all points. I had no sooner got under way to tank your ladyship, but I have born down upon my noble friend his lordship too. I hope your lordship's well?

L. Trink. Very well, I thank you, captain!—But you seem to be hurt in the service: what is the meaning of that patch over your right eye?

O'Cut. Some advanced wages from my new post, my lord! This pressing is hot work, tho' it entitles us to smart-money.

L. Free. And pray in what perilous adventure did you get that scar, captain?

O'Cut. Quite out of my element, indeed my lady! I got in an engagement by land. A day or two ago I spied three stout fellows, belonging to a merchant-man. They made down Wapping. I immediately gave my lads the signal to chace, and we bore down right upon them. They tacked, and lay to. We gave them a thundering broadside, which they resaved like men; and one of them made use of small arms, which carried off the weather-moost corner of Ned Gage's hat; so I immediately stood in with him, and raked him, but resaved a wound on my starboard eye, from the stock of the pistol. However, we took them all, and they now lie under the hatches, with fifty more, a-board a tender off the Tower.

L. Trink. Well done, noble captain!—But however you will soon have better employment, for I think the next step to your present post, is commonly a ship.

O'Cut. The sooner the better, my lord! Honest Terence O'Cutter shall never flinch, I warrant you; and has had as much sea-service as any man in the navy.

L. Trink. You may depend on my good offices, captain!—But in the mean time it is in your power to do me a favour.

O'Cut. A favour! my lord! your lordship does me honour. I would go round the world, from one end to the other, by day or by night, to serve your lordship, or my good lady here.

L. Trink. Dear madam, the luckiest thought in nature! [*Apart to L. Free.*]—The favour I have to ask of you, captain, need not carry you so far out of your way. The whole affair is, that there are a couple of impudent fellows at an inn in Holborn, who have affronted me, and you would oblige me infinitely by pressing them into his Majesty's service.

L. Free. Now I understand you.——Admirable!

[*Apart to L. Trink.*]

O'Cut. With all my heart, my lord, and tank you too, fait. But, by the bye, I hope they are not house-keepers, or freemen of the city. There's the devil to pay in meddling with them. They boder one so about liberty and property, and stuff. It was but t'other day that Jack Trowser was carried before my Lord Mayor, and lost above a twelve-month's pay, for nothing at-all—at-all.

L. Trink. I'll take care you shall be brought into no trouble. These fellows were formerly my grooms. If you call on me in the morning, I'll go with you to the place.

O'Cut. I'll be with your lordship, and bring with me four or five as pretty boys as you'll wish to clap your two lucking eyes upon of a summer's day.

L. Trink. I am much obliged to you. But, captain, I have another little favour to beg of you.

O'Cut. Upon my shoul, and I'll do it.

L. Trink. What, before you know it?

O'Cut. Fore and aft, my lord!

L. Trink. A gentleman has offended me in a point of honour——

O'Cut. Cut his throat.

L. Trink. Will you carry him a letter from me?

O'Cut. Indeed and I will: and I'll take you in tow too, and you shall engage him yard-arm and yard-arm.

L. Trink. Why then, captain, you'll come a little earlier to-morrow morning than you proposed, that you may attend him with my billet, before you proceed on the other affair.

O'Cut. Never fear it, my lord!—Your sarvant! —My ladyship, your humble sarvant!

L. Free. Captain, yours! Pray give my service to my friend Mrs. O'Cutter. How does she do?

O'Cut. I tank your ladyship's axing——The dear creature is purely tight and well.

L. Trink. How many children have you, captain?

O'Cut. Four, and please your lordship, and another upon the stocks.

L. Trink. When it is launched, I hope to be at the christening. I'll stand godfather, captain!

O'Cut. Your lordship's very good.

L. Trink. Well, you'll come to-morrow.

O'Cut. O, I'll not fail, my lord! Little Terence O'Cutter never fails, fait, when a troat is to be cut. [Exit.]

L. Free. Ha, ha, ha! But sure you don't intend to ship off both her father and her country lover for the Indies?

L. Trink. O no! Only let them contemplate the inside of a ship for a day or two.

L. Free. Well, but after all, my lord, this is a very bold undertaking. I don't think you'll be able to put it in practice.

L. Trink. Nothing so easy, 'pon honour. To press a gentleman—a man of quality—one of

us——would not be so easy, I grant you. But these fellows, you know, have not half so decent an appearance as one of my footmen: and from their behaviour, conversation, and dress, it is very possible to mistake them for grooms and ostlers.

L. Free. There may be something in that indeed. But what use do you propose to make of this stratagem?

L. Trink. Every use in nature. This artifice, must at least take them out of the way for some time, and in the mean while measures may be concerted to carry off the girl.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mrs. Oakly, madam, is at the door, in her chariot, and desires to have the honour of speaking to your ladyship, on particular business.

L. Trink. Mrs. Oakly! what can that jealous-pated woman want with you?

L. Free. No matter what.—I hate her mortally.—Let her in.

[*Exit Servant.*]

L. Trink. What wind blows her hither?

L. Free. A wind that must blow us some good.

L. Trink. How?——I was amazed you chose to see her.

L. Free. How can you be so slow of apprehension?——She comes you may be sure on some occasion relating to this girl: in order to assist young Oakly perhaps, to soothe me, and gain intelligence, and so forward the match; but I'll forbid the banns, I warrant you.——Whatever she wants, I'll draw some sweet mischief out of it.——But away! away!——I think I hear her—slip down the back stairs

—or, stay, now I think on't, go out this way—meet her—and be sure to make her a very respectful bow, as you go out.

L. Trink. Hush! here she is.

Enter Mrs. OAKLY.

[*L. Trinket bows, and exit.*]

Mrs. Oak. I beg pardon for giving your ladyship this trouble.

L. Free. I am always glad of the honour of seeing Mrs. Oakly.

Mrs. Oak. There is a letter, madam, just come from the country, which has occasioned some alarm in our family. It comes from Mr. Ruffet——

L. Free. Mr. Ruffet!

Mrs. Oak. Yes, from Mr. Ruffet, madam! and is chiefly concerning his daughter. As she has the honour of being related to your ladyship, I took the liberty of waiting on you.

L. Free. She is indeed, as you say, madam, a relation of mine! but after what has happened, I scarce know how to acknowledge her.

Mrs. Oak. Has she been so much to blame then?

L. Free. So much, madam?—Only judge for yourself.—Though she had been so indiscreet, not to say indecent in her conduct, as to elope from her father, I was in hopes to have hush'd up that matter, for the honour of our family.—But she has run away from me too, madam!—went off in the most abrupt manner, not an hour ago.

Mrs. Oak. You surprise me. Indeed her father, by his letter, seems apprehensive of the worst con-

sequences.—But does your ladyship imagine any harm has happened?

L. Free. I can't tell—I hope not—But indeed she is a strange girl. You know, madam, young women can't be too cautious in their conduct. She is, I am sorry to declare it, a very dangerous person to take into a family.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed!

[*Alarmed.*]

L. Free. If I was to say all I know!

Mrs. Oak. Why sure your ladyship knows of nothing that has been carried on clandestinely between her and Mr. Oakly.

[*In disorder.*]

L. Free. Mr. Oakly!

Mrs. Oak. Mr. Oakly—no, not Mr. Oakly—that is, not my husband—I don't mean him—not him—but his nephew—young Mr. Oakly.

L. Free. Jealous of her husband! So, so! Now I know my game.

[*Aside.*]

Mrs. Oak. But pray, madam, give me leave to ask, was there any thing very particular in her conduct, while she was in your ladyship's house?

L. Free. Why, really, considering she was here scarce a week, her behaviour was rather mysterious;—letters and messages, to and fro, between her and I don't know who—I suppose you know that Mr. Oakly's nephew has been here, madam.

Mrs. Oak. I was not sure of it. Has he been to wait on your ladyship already on this occasion?

L. Free. To wait on me!—The expression is much too polite for the nature of his visit.—My lord Trinket, the nobleman whom you met as you came in, had, you must know, madam, some thoughts of my niece, and as it would have been an advantage—

ous match, I was glad of it; but I believe, after what he has been witness to this morning, he will drop all thoughts of it.

Mrs. Oak. I am sorry that any relation of mine should so far forget himself——

L. Free. It's no matter—his behaviour, indeed, as well as the young lady's, was pretty extraordinary——and yet after all, I don't believe he is the object of her affections.

Mrs. Oak. Ha! [Much alarmed.]

L. Free. She has certainly an attachment somewhere, a strong one; but his lordship, who was present all the time, was convinced, as well as myself, that Mr. Oakly's nephew was rather a convenient friend, a kind of go-between than the lover.——Bless me, madam, you change colour! you seem uneasy! what's the matter?

Mrs. Oak. Nothing,——madam,——nothing,——a little shock'd that my husband should behave so.

L. Free. Your husband, madam!

Mrs. Oak. His nephew, I mean.——His unpardonable rudeness——but I am not well——I am sorry I have given your ladyship so much trouble——I'll take my leave.

L. Free. I declare, madam, you frighten me. Your being so visibly affected, makes me quite uneasy. I hope I have not said any thing——I really don't believe your husband is in fault. Men, to be sure, allow themselves strange liberties. But I think, nay I am sure, it cannot be so. It is impossible. Don't let what I have said have any effect on you.

Mrs. Oak. No, it has not——I have no idea of such a thing.——Your ladyship's most obedient——

[*Going, returns.*]——But sure, madam, you have not heard or don't know any thing.

L. Free. Come, come, Mrs. Oakly, I see how it is, and it would not be kind to say all I know. I dare not tell you what I have heard. Only be on your guard—there can be no harm in that. Do you be against giving the girl any countenance, and see what effect it has.

Mrs. Oak. I will——I am much obliged——But does it appear to your ladyship then that Mr. Oakly——

L. Free. No, not at all—nothing in't, I dare say—I would not create uneasiness in a family—but I am a woman myself, have been married, and can't help feeling for you.—But don't be uneasy, there's nothing in't, I dare say.

Mrs. Oak. I think so.—Your ladyship's humble servant.

L. Free. Your servant, madam.—Pray don't be alarmed, I must insist on your not making yourself uneasy.

Mrs. Oak. Not at all alarmed—not in the least uneasy.—Your most obedient. [Exit.

L. Free. Ha, ha, ha! There she goes, brimful of anger and jealousy, to vent it all on her husband. Mercy on the poor man!

Enter Lord TRINKET.

Bless me! my lord, I thought you was gone.

L. Trink. Only into the next room. My curiosity would not let me stir a step further. I heard it all, and was never more diverted in my life, 'pon honour. Ha, ha, ha!

L. Free. How the silly creature took it! Ha, ha, ha!

L. Trink. Ha, ha, ha!—My dear Lady Free love, you have a deal of ingenuity, a deal of *esprit*, 'pon honour.

L. Free. A little shell thrown into the enemy's works, that's all.

Both. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

L. Free. But I must leave you. I have twenty visits to pay. You'll let me know how you succeed in your secret expedition.

L. Trink. That you may depend on.

L. Free. Remember then that to-morrow morning I expect to see you.—At present your lordship will excuse me.—Who's there? [*Calling to the servants.*] Send Epingle into my dressing-room. [*Exit.*]

L. Trink. So!—If O'Cutter and his myrmidons are alert, I think I can't fail of success, and then *prenez garde*, Mademoiselle Harriot!—This is one of the drollest circumstances in nature.—Here is my lady Free love, a woman of sense, a woman that knows the world too, assisting me in this design. I never knew her ladyship so much out.—How, in the name of wonder, can she imagine that a man of quality, or any man else 'egad, would marry a fine girl, after—not I, 'pon honour. No—no—when I have had the *entamure*, let who will take the rest of the loaf. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Changes to Mr. OAKLY's House. Enter HARRIOT following a Servant.

Har. Not at home!—Are you sure that Mrs. Oakly is not at home, sir?

Serv. She is just gone out, madam.

Har. I have something of consequence.—If you will give me leave, sir, I will wait till she returns.

Serv. You would not see her, if you did, madam. She has given positive orders not to be interrupted with any company to-day.

Har. Sure, sir, if you was to let her know that I had particular business—

Serv. I should not dare to trouble her, indeed, madam.

Har. How unfortunate this is! What can I do?—Pray, sir, can I see Mr. Oakly then?

Serv. Yes, ma'am; I'll acquaint my master, if you please.

Har. Pray do, sir.

Serv. Will you favour me with your name, madam?

Har. Be pleased, sir, to let him know that a lady desires to speak with him.

Serv. I shall, madam.

[*Exit servant.*]

Har. I wish I could have seen Mrs. Oakly. What an unhappy situation am I reduced to! What will the world say of me?—And yet what could I do? To remain at Lady Freelove's was impossible. Charles, I must own, has this very day revived much

of my tenderness for him ; and yet I dread the wildness of his disposition. I must now, however, solicit Mr. Oakly's protection, a circumstance (all things considered) rather disagreeable to a delicate mind, and which nothing, but the absolute necessity of it, could excuse. Good Heavens ! What a multitude of difficulties and distresses am I thrown into, by my father's obstinate perseverance to force me into a marriage, which my soul abhors !

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. [*At entering.*] Where is this lady ?— [*Seeing her.*] Bless me, Miss Ruffet, is it you ?— Was ever any thing so unlucky ? [*Aside.*] Is it possible, madam, that I see you here ?

Har. It is too true, sir ; and the occasion on which I am now to trouble you is so much in need of an apology, that—

Oak. Pray make none, madam.—If my wife should return before I get her out of the house again !— [*Aside.*

Har. I dare say, sir, you are not quite a stranger to the attachment your nephew has professed to me.

Oak. I am not, madam. I hope Charles has not been guilty of any baseness towards you. If he has, I'll never see his face again.

Har. I have no cause to accuse him. But—

Oak. But what, madam ? Pray be quick !— The very person in the world I would not have seen !

[*Aside.*

Har. You seem uneasy, sir !

Oak. No, nothing at all—Pray go on, madam.

Har. I am at present, fir, through a concurrence of strange accidents, in a very unfortunate situation, and do not know what will become of me without your assistance.

Oak. I'll do every thing in my power to serve you, I know of your leaving your father, by a letter we have had from him. Pray let me know the rest of your story.

Har. My story, fir, is very short. When I left my father's I came immediately to London, and took refuge with a relation, where, instead of meeting with the protection I expected, I was alarmed with the most infamous designs upon my honour. It is not an hour ago, since your nephew rescued me from the attempts of a villain. I tremble to think, that I left him actually engaged in a duel.

Oak. He is very safe. He has just sent home the chariot from the St. Albans' tavern, where he dines to-day. But what are your commands for me, madam?

Har. I am heartily glad to hear of his safety.—The favour, fir, I would now request of you is, that you would suffer me to remain for a few days in your house.

Oak. Madam!

Har. And that in the mean time you will use your utmost endeavours to reconcile me to my father, without his forcing me into a marriage with Sir Harry Beagle.

Oak. This is the most perplexing situation!—Why did not Charles take care to bestow you properly?

Har. It is most probable, sir, that I should not have consented to such a measure myself. The world is but too apt to censure, even without a cause: and if you are so kind as to admit me into your house, I must desire not to consider Mr. Oakly in any other light, than as your nephew: as in my present circumstances I have particular objections to it.

Oak. What an unlucky circumstance!—Upon my soul, madam, I would do any thing to serve you—but being in my house, creates a difficulty that——

Har. I hope, sir, you do not doubt the truth of what I have told you.

Oak. I religiously believe every tittle of it, madam, but I have particular family considerations, that——

Har. Sure, sir, you cannot suspect me to be base enough to form any connections in your family contrary to your inclinations, while I am living in your house.

Oak. Such connections, madam, would do me and all my family great honour. I never dreamt of any scruples on that account.—What can I do?—Let me see—let me see—suppose—— [*Pausing.*]

Enter Mrs. OAKLY behind, in a capuchin, tippet, &c.

Mrs. Oak. I am sure I heard the voice of a woman conversing with my husband——Ha! [*Seeing Harriot.*] It is so, indeed! Let me contain myself—I'll listen.

Har. I see, sir, you are not inclin'd to serve me—good heaven! what am I reserv'd to?—Why,

why did I leave my father's house to expose myself to greater distresses? [Ready to weep.

Oak. I would do any thing for your sake: indeed I would. So pray be comforted, and I'll think of some proper place to bestow you in.

Mrs. Oak. So! so!

Har. What place can be so proper as your own house?

Oak. My dear madam, I—I——

Mrs. Oak. My dear madam——mighty well!

Oak. Hush!—hark!——what noise——no——nothing. But I'll be plain with you, madam, we may be interrupted.——The family consideration I hinted at, is nothing else than my wife. She is a little unhappy in her temper, madam!—and if you was to be admitted into the house, I don't know what would be the consequence.

Mrs. Oak. Very fine——

Har. My behaviour, sir!

Oak. My dear life, it would be impossible for you to behave in such a manner, as not to give her suspicion.

Har. But if your nephew, sir, took every thing upon himself——

Oak. Still that would not do, madam!——Why this very morning, when the letter came from your father, though I positively denied any knowledge of it, and Charles owned it, yet it was almost impossible to pacify her.

Mrs. Oak. The letter!—How I have been bubbled!

Har. What shall I do? What will become of me?

Oak. Why, look'e, my dear madam, since my wife is so strong an objection, it is absolutely impossible for me to take you into my house. Nay if I had not known she was gone out, just before you came, I should be uneasy at your being here even now. So we must manage as well as we can. I'll take a private lodging for you a little way off, unknown to Charles or my wife, or any body; and if Mrs. Oakly should discover it at last, why the whole matter will light upon Charles you know.

Mrs. Oak. Upon Charles!

Har. How unhappy is my situation! [*Weeping.*] I am ruined for ever.

Oak. Ruin'd! Not at all. Such a thing as this has happened to many a young lady before you, and all has been well again—Keep up your spirits! I'll contrive, if I possibly can, to visit you every day.

Mrs. Oak. [*Advancing.*] Will you so? O, Mr. Oakly! have I discovered you at last? I'll visit you, indeed. And you, my dear madam, I'll——

Har. Madam, I don't understand——

Mrs. Oak. I understand the whole affair, and have understood it for some time past.—You shall have a private lodging, miss!—It is the fittest place for you, I believe.—How dare you look me in the face?

Oak. For heaven's sake, my love, don't be so violent.—You are quite wrong in this affair—you don't know who you are a talking to. That lady is a person of fashion.

Mrs. Oak. Fine fashion, indeed! to seduce other women's husbands!

Har. Dear madam; how can you imagine——

Oak. I tell you, my dear, this is the young lady that Charles——

Mrs. Oak. Mighty well! but that won't do, fir! —Did not I hear you lay the whole intrigue together? Did not I hear your fine plot of throwing all the blame upon Charles?——

Oak. Nay, be cool a moment.——You must know, my dear, that the letter which came this morning related to this lady——

Mrs. Oak. I know it.

Oak. And since that, it seems, Charles has been so fortunate as to——

Mrs. Oak. O, you deceitful man!——That trick is too stale to pass again with me.——It is plain now what you meant by your proposing to take her into the house this morning.——But the gentlewoman could introduce herself, I see.

Oak. Fie! fie! my dear, she came on purpose to enquire for you.

Mrs. Oak. For me!——better and better!——Did not she watch her opportunity, and come to you just as I went out? But I am obliged to you for your visit, madam. It is sufficiently paid. Pray don't let me detain you.

Oak. For shame! for shame, Mrs. Oakly! How can you be so absurd? Is this proper behaviour to a lady of her character?

Mrs. Oak. I have heard her character. Go, my fine run-away madam! Now you've eloped from your family, and run away from your aunt! Go! ——You shan't stay here, I promise you.

Oak. Pr'ythee, be quiet. You don't know what you are doing. She shall stay.

Mrs. Oak. She shan't stay a minute.

Oak. She shall stay a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, a year!—'Sdeath, madam, she shall stay for ever if I choose it.

Mrs. Oak. How!

Har. For heaven's sake, sir, let me go. I am frightened to death.

Oak. Don't be afraid, madam!—She shall stay, I insist upon it.

Ruf. [*within.*] I tell you, sir, I will go up. I am sure the lady is here, and nothing shall hinder me.

Har. O my father! my father! [*Faints away.*]

Oak. See! she faints. [*Catching her.*]—Ring the bell! Who's there?

Mrs. Oak. What! take her into your arms too!—I have no patience.

Enter Russet and Servants.

Ruf. Where is this—ha! fainting! [*Running to her.*] O my dear Harriot! my child! my child!

Oak. Your coming so abruptly shocked her spirits. But she revives. How do you, madam?

Har. [*To Russet.*] O, sir!

Ruf. O my dear girl! How could you run away from your father, that loves you with such fondness!—But I was sure I should find you here——

Mrs. Oak. There—there!—sure he should find her here! Did not I tell you so?—Are not you a wicked man, to carry on such base underhand doings, with a gentleman's daughter?

Ruf. Let me tell you, sir, whatever you may think of the matter, I shall not easily put up with this behaviour.—How durst you encourage my

daughter to an elopement, and receive her in your house.

Mrs. Oak. There, mind that!—The thing is as plain as the light.

Oak. I tell you, you misunderstand——

Ruf. Look you, Mr. Oakly, I shall expect satisfaction from your family for so gross an affront.—Zouns, sir, I am not to be used ill by any man in England.

Har. My dear sir, I can assure you——

Ruf. Hold your tongue, girl! You'll put me in a passion.

Oak. Sir, this is all a mistake.

Ruf. A mistake! Did not I find her in your house?

Oak. Upon my soul, she has not been in my house above——

Mrs. Oak. Did not I hear you say you would take her a lodging? a private lodging!

Oak. Yes, but that——

Ruf. Has not this affair been carried on a long time in spite of my teeth?

Oak. Sir, I never troubled myself——

Mrs. Oak. Never troubled yourself!—Did not you insist on her staying in the house, whether I would or no?

Oak. No.

Ruf. Did not you send to meet her, when she came to town?

Oak. No.

Mrs. Oak. Did not you deceive me about the letter this morning?

Oak. No—no—no—I tell you, no.

Mrs. Oak. Yes—yes—yes—I tell you, yes.

Ruf. Shan't I believe my own eyes?

Mrs. Oak. Shan't I believe my own ears?

Oak. I tell you, you are both deceived.

Ruf. Zouns, fir, I'll have satisfaction.

Mrs. Oak. I'll stop these fine doings, I warrant you.

Oak. 'Sdeath, you will not let me speak—and you are both alike I think.—I wish you were married to one another with all my heart.

Mrs. Oak. Mighty well! mighty well!

Ruf. I shall soon find a time to talk with you.

Oak. Find a time to talk! you have talked enough now for all your lives.

Mrs. Oak. Very fine! Come along, fir! Leave that lady with her father. Now she is in the properest hands.

Oak. I wish I could leave you in his hands. [*Going, returns.*] I shall follow you, madam! One word with you, fir!—The height of your passion, and Mrs. Oakly's strange misapprehension of this whole affair, makes it impossible to explain matters to you at present. I will do it when you please, and how you please.

Ruf. Yes, yes; I'll have satisfaction.—So, madam! I have found you at last.—You have made a fine confusion here.

Har. I have, indeed, been the innocent cause of a great deal of confusion.

Ruf. Innocent!—What business had you to be running hither after—

Har. My dear fir, you misunderstand the whole affair. I have not been in this house half an hour.

Ruf. Zouns, girl, don't put me in a passion!—You know I love you—but a lie puts me in a passion. But come along—we'll leave this house directly—[*Charles singing without.*] Hey-day! what now?

After a noise without, enter CHARLES, drunk.

Char. But my wine neither nurses nor babies can bring,
And a big-bellied bottle's a mighty good thing.

[Singing.]

What's here? a woman? Harriot! impossible! My dearest, sweetest Harriot! I have been looking all over the town for you, and at last—when I was tired—and weary—and disappointed—why then the honest Major and I sat down together to drink your health in pint bumpers. [Running up to her.]

Ruf. Stand off!—How dare you take any liberty with my daughter before me? Zouns, sir, I'll be the death of you.

Char. Ha! 'Squire Ruffet too!—You jolly old cock, how do you do?—But Harriot! my dear girl! [Taking hold of her.] My life, my soul, my——

Ruf. Let her go, sir—come away Harriot!—Leave him this instant, or I'll tear you asunder.

[Pulling her.]

Har. There needs no violence to tear me from a man who could disguise himself in such a gross manner, at a time when he knew I was in the utmost distress. [Disengages herself, and exit with Ruffet.]

Char. Only hear me, sir—madam!—my dear Harriot—Mr. Ruffet—gone!—she's gone!—and 'egad in very ill humour, and in very bad company!—I'll go after her—but hold!—I

shall only make it worse—as I did—now I recollect—once before. How the devil came they here?—Who would have thought of finding her in my own house?—My head turns round with conjectures.—I believe I am drunk—very drunk—so 'egad, I'll e'en go and sleep myself sober, and then enquire the meaning of all this. For,

I love Sue, and Sue loves me, &c.

[Exit singing.]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

OAKLY's House. Enter Mrs. OAKLY and Major OAKLY.

Major.

WELL—well—but sister!—

Mrs. Oak. I will know the truth of this matter. Why can't you tell me the whole story?

Maj. I'll tell you nothing.—There's nothing to tell—you know the truth already.—Besides, what have I to do with it? Suppose there was a disturbance yesterday, what's that to me? was I here? it's no business of mine.

Mrs. Oak. Then why do you study to make it so? Am not I well assured that this mischief commenced at your house in the country? And now you are carrying it on in town.

Maj. This is always the case in family squabbles. My brother has put you out of humour, and you choose to vent your spleen upon me.

Mrs. Oak. Because I know that you are the occasion of his ill usage. Mr. Oakly never behaved in such a manner before.

Maj. I? Am I the occasion of it?

Mrs. Oak. Yes, you. I am sure on't.

Maj. I am glad on't with all my heart.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed!

Maj. Ay, indeed: and you are the more obliged to me.—Come, come, sister, it's time you should reflect a little. My brother is become a public jest; and by-and-by, if this foolish affair gets wind, the whole family will be the subject of town-talk.

Mrs. Oak. And well it may, when you take so much pains to expose us.—The little disquiets and uneasiness of other families are kept secret; but here quarrels are fomented, and afterwards industriously made public.—And you, sir, you have done all this—you are my greatest enemy.

Maj. Your truest friend, sister.

Mrs. Oak. But it's no wonder. You have no feelings of humanity, no sense of domestic happiness, no idea of tenderness or attachment to any woman.

Maj. No idea of plague or disquiet—no, no—and yet I can love a woman for all that—heartily—as you say, tenderly—But then I always choose a woman should shew a little love for me too.

Mrs. Oak. Cruel insinuation!—But I defy your malice—Mr. Oakly can have no doubt of my affection for him.

Maj. Nor I neither; and yet your affection, such as it is, has all the evil properties of aversion. You absolutely kill him with kindness. Why, what a

life he leads! He serves for nothing but a mere whetstone of your ill-humour.

Mrs. Oak. Pray now, sir!

Mj. The violence of your temper makes his house uncomfortable to him, poisons his meals, and breaks his rest.

Mrs. Oak. I beg, Major Oakly, that——

Maj. This is to have a wife that dotes upon one!——the least trifles kindle your suspicion; you take fire in an instant, and set the whole family in a blaze.

Mrs. Oak. This is beyond all patience.—No, sir, 'tis you are the incendiary—you are the cause of—I can't bear such—[*ready to weep.*]
—from this instant, sir, I forbid you my house. However Mr. Oakly may treat me himself, I'll never be made the sport of all his insolent relations. [Exit.]

Maj. Yes, yes, I knew I should be turn'd out of doors. There she goes——back again to my brother directly. Poor gentleman!——'Slife, if he was but half the man that I am, I'd engage to keep her going to and fro all day, like a shuttlecock.

Enter CHARLES.

What, Charles!

Char. O major! have you heard of what happened after I left you yesterday?

Maj. Heard! Yes, yes, I have heard it plain enough. But poor Charles! Ha, ha, ha! What a scene of confusion! I would give the world to have been there.

Char. And I would give the world to have been any where else. Curfed fortune!

Maj. To come in so opportunely at the tail of an adventure!—Was not your mistress mighty glad to see you? You was very fond of her, I dare say.

Char. I am upon the rack. Who can tell what rudeness I might offer her! I can remember nothing.—I deserve to lose her—to make myself a beast!—and at such a time too!—O fool, fool, fool!

Maj. Pr'ythee, be quiet, Charles!—Never vex yourself about nothing; this will all be made up the first time you see her.

Char. I should dread to see her—and yet the not knowing where she is, distracts me—her father may force her to marry Sir Harry Beagle immediately.

Maj. Not he, I promise you. She'd run plump into your arms first, in spite of her father's teeth.

Char. But then her father's violence, and the mildness of her disposition—

Maj. Mildness!—Ridiculous!—Trust to the spirit of the sex in her. I warrant you, like all the rest, she'll have perverseness enough not to do as her father would have her.

Char. Well, well—But then my behaviour to her. To expose myself in such a condition to her again! The very occasion of our former quarrel!—

Maj. Quarrel! ha, ha, ha! What signifies a quarrel with a mistress? Why, the whole affair of making love, as they call it, is nothing but quarrelling and making it up again. They quarrel o' purpose to kiss and be friends.

Char. Then indeed things seemed to be taking a fortunate turn—To renew our difference at such a time!—Just when I had some reason to hope.

for a reconciliation!—May wine be my poison if ever I am drunk again!

Maj. Ay, ay, so every man says the next morning.

Char. Where, where can she be? Her father would hardly carry her back to lady Freelove's, and he has no house in town himself, nor Sir Harry—I don't know what to think—I'll go in search of her, though I don't know where to direct myself.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. A gentleman, sir, that calls himself Captain O'Cutter, desires to speak with you.

Char. Don't trouble me—I'll see nobody—I'm not at home—

Serv. The gentleman says he has very particular business, and he must see you.

Char. What's his name? Who did you say?

Serv. Captain O'Cutter, sir.

Char. Captain O'Cutter! I never heard of him before. Do you know any thing of him, major?

Maj. Not I—but you hear he has particular business. I'll leave the room.

Char. He can have no business that needs be a secret to you.—Desire the Captain to walk up.—*[Exit Servant.]*—What would I give if this unknown Captain was to prove a messenger from my Harriot!

Enter Captain O'CUTTER.

O'Cut. Gentlemen, your servant. Is either of your names Charles Oakly, esq.?

Char. Charles Oakly, sir, is my name, if you have any business with it.

O'Cut. Avast, avast, my dear!—I have a little business with your name, but as I was to let nobody know it, I can't mention it till you clear the decks, fait.— [Pointing to the major.]

Char. This gentleman, fir, is my most intimate friend, and any thing that concerns me may be mentioned before him.

O'Cut. O; if he's your friend, my dear, we may do all above-board. It's only about your deciding a deferance with my Lord Trinket. He wants to shew you a little warm work; and as I was steering this way, he desired me to fetch you this letter. [Giving a letter.]

Maj. How, fir, a challenge!

O'Cut. Yes, fait, a challenge. I am to be his lordship's second; and if you are fond of a hot birth, and will come along with that jontleman, we'll all go to it together, and make a little line of battle a-head of our own, my dear.

Char. [Reading.] Ha! what's this? This may be useful. [Aside.]

Maj. Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you.—A rare fellow this. [Aside.] Yes, yes, I'll meet all the good company. I'll be there in my waistcoat and pumps, and take a morning's breathing with you. Are you very fond of fighting, fir?

O'Cut. Indeed and I am; I love it better than salt beef or biscuit.

Maj. But pray, fir, how are you interested in this difference? Do you know what it is about?

O'Cut. O, the devil burn me, not I. What signifies what it's about, you know? so we do but tilt a little.

Maj. What, fight and not know for what?

O'Cut. When the signal's out for engaging, what signifies talking?

Maj. I fancy, fir, a duel is a common breakfast with you. I'll warrant now, you have been engag'd in many such affairs.

O'Cut. Upon my shoul, and I have: sea or land, its all one to little Terence O'Cutter.—When I was last in Dublin, I fought one jontleman for cheating me out of a thousand pounds: I fought two of the Mermaid's crew about Sally Macguire; three about politicks; and one about the play-house in Smock-Ailey. But upon my fait, since I am in England, I have done nothing at-all, at-all.

Char. This is lucky—but my transport will discover me. [*Aside.*] Will you be so kind, fir, [*To O'Cutter.*] as to make my compliments to his lordship, and assure him that I shall do myself the honour of waiting on him.

O'Cut. Indeed and I will.—Arrah, my dear, won't you come too? [*To Major Oakly.*]

Maj. Depend upon't. We'll go through the whole exercise: carte, tierce, and segoon, captain.

Char. Now to get my intelligence. [*Aside.*] I think the time, fir, his lordship appoints in his letter, is—a—

O'Cut. You say right—Six o'clock.

Char. And the place—a—a—is—I think, behind Montague-house.

O'Cut. No, my dear!—Avast, by the Ring in Hyde-Park, fait—I settled it there myself, for fare of interruption.

Char. True, as you say, the Ring in Hyde-Park—I had forgot—Very well, I'll not fail you, sir.

O'Cut. Devil burn me, not I. Upon my shoul, little Terence O'Cutter will see fair play, or he'll know the reason—And so, my dear, your servant.

Maj. Ha, ha, ha! What a fellow!—He loves fighting like a game cock.

Char. O uncle! the luckiest thing in the world!

Maj. What, to have the chance of being run through the body! I desire no such good fortune.

Char. Wish me joy, wish me joy! I have found her, my dear girl, my Harriot!—She is at an inn in Holborn, major!

Maj. Ay! how do you know?

Char. Why, this dear, delightful, charming, blundering captain, has delivered me a wrong letter.

Maj. A wrong letter!

Char. Yes, a letter from Lord Trinket to Lady Freelove.

Maj. The devil! What are the contents?

Char. The news I told you just now, that she's at an inn in Holborn:—and besides, an excuse from my lord, for not waiting on her ladyship this morning, according to his promise, as he shall be entirely taken up with his design upon Harriot.

Maj. So!—so!—A plot between the lord and the lady.

Char. What his plot is I don't know, but I shall beg leave to be made a party in it: so perhaps his lordship and I may meet, and decide our deferance, as the captain calls it, before to-morrow morning.
—There! read, read, man! [*Giving the letter.*

Maj. [*Reading.*] Um—um—um——Very fine!
And what do you propose doing?

Char. To go thither immediately.

Maj. Then you shall take me with you. Who knows what his lordship's designs may be? I begin to suspect foul play.

Char. No, no; pray mind your own business. If I find there is any need of your assistance, I'll send for you.

Maj. You'll manage this affair like a boy now—Go on rashly with noise and bustle, and fury, and get yourself into another scrape.

Char. No—no—Let me alone; I'll go *incog.*—Leave my chariot at some distance—Proceed prudently, and take care of myself, I warrant you. I did not imagine that I should ever rejoice at receiving a challenge, but this is the most fortunate accident that could possibly have happened. B'ye, b'ye, uncle! [*Exit hastily.*]

Maj. I don't half approve of this—and yet I can hardly suspect his lordship of any very deep designs neither.—Charles may easily outwit him. Hark ye, William!

[*At seeing a servant at some distance.*]

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir!

Maj. Where's my brother?

Serv. In his study——alone, sir.

Maj. And how is he, William?

Serv. Pretty well, I believe, sir.

Maj. Ay, ay, but is he in good humour, or——

Serv. I never meddle in family affairs, not I, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Maj. Well said, William!—No bad hint for me, perhaps!—What a strange world we live in!—No two people in it love one another better than my brother and sister, and yet the bitterest enemies could not torment each other more heartily.—Ah, if he had but half my spirit!—And yet he don't want it neither—But I know his temper—He pieces out the matter with maxims, and scraps of philosophy, and odds and ends of sentences—I must live in peace—Patience is the best remedy—Any thing for a quiet life! and so on—However, yesterday, to give him his due, he behaved like a man. Keep it up, brother! keep it up! or it's all over with you. Since mischief is on foot, I'll even set it forwards on all sides. I'll in to him directly, read him one of my morning lectures, and persuade him, if I possibly can, to go out with me immediately; or work him up to some open act of rebellion against the sovereign authority of his lady-wife. Zounds, brother! rant, and roar, and rave, and turn the house out of the window. If I was a husband!—'Sdeath, what a pity it is, that nobody knows how to manage a wife but a bachelor.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Changes to the Bull and Gate Inn. Enter HARRIOT.

Har. What will become of me? My father is enraged and deaf to all remonstrances, and here I am to remain by his positive orders, to receive this

booby baronet's odious addresses.—Among all my distresses, I must confess that Charles's behaviour yesterday is not the least. So wild! So given up to excesses! And yet—I am ashamed to own it even myself—I love him: and death itself shall not prevail on me to give my hand to Sir Harry.—But here he comes! What shall I do with him?

Enter Sir HARRY BEAGLE.

Sir H. Your servant, miss!—What? Not speak!—Bashful, mayhap—Why then I will.—Look'e, miss, I am a man of few words.—What signifies hagling? It looks just like a dealer.—What d'ye think of me for a husband—I am a tight young fellow—sound wind and limb—free from all natural blemishes—Rum all over, damme.

Har. Sir, I don't understand you. Speak English, and I'll give you an answer.

Sir H. English! Why so I do—and good plain English too.—What d'ye think of me for a husband?—That's English, e'nt it?—I know none of your French lingo, none of your *parlyvoos*, not I.—What d'ye think of me for a husband? The 'Squire says you shall marry me.

Har. What shall I say to him? I had best be civil. [*Aside.*]—I think, sir, you deserve a much better wife, and beg—

Sir H. Better! no, no,—though you're so knowing, I'm not to be taken in so.—You're a fine thing—Your points are all good.

Har. Sir Harry! Sincerity is above all ceremony. Excuse me, if I declare I never will be your wife. And if you have a real regard for me, and

my happiness, you will give up all pretension to me. Shall I beseech you, sir, to persuade my father not to urge a marriage, to which I am determined never to consent?

Sir H. Hey! how! what! be off!—Why, its a match, miss!—It's done and done on both sides.

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir, withdraw your claim to me.—I never can be prevailed on—in-deed I cann't——

Sir H. What, make a match and then draw stakes! That's doing of nothing—Play or pay, all the world over.

Har. Let me prevail on you, sir!—I am determined not to marry you at all events.

Sir H. But your father's determined you shall, miss.—So the odds are on my side.—I am not quite sure of my horse, but I have the rider hollow.

Har. Your horse! Sir—d'ye take me for—but I forgive you.—I beseech you come into my proposal. It will be better for us both in the end.

Sir H. I cann't be off.

Har. Let me intreat you.

Sir H. I tell you, it's impossible.

Har. Pray, pray do, sir.

Sir H. I cann't, damme.

Har. I beseech you.

Sir H. [*Whistles.*]

Har. How! laughed at?

Sir H. Will you marry me? Dear Ally, Ally Croker!

[*Singing.*]

Har. Marry you? I had rather be married to a slave, a wretch—You!

[*Walks about.*]

Sir H. A fine going thing.—She has a deal of foot—treads well upon her pasterns—goes above her ground—

Har. Peace, wretch!—Do you talk to me as if I were your horse?

Sir H. Horse! Why not speak of my horse? If your fine ladies had half as many good qualities, they would be much better bargains.

Har. And if their wretches of husbands liked them half so well as they do their horses, they would lead better lives.

Sir H. Mayhap so.—But what signifies talking to you?—The 'Squire shall know your tricks—He'll doctor you.—I'll go and talk to him.

Har. Go any where, so that you go from me.

Sir H. He'll break you in.—If you won't go in a snaffle, you must be put in a curb—He'll break you, damme. [Exit.]

Har. A wretch!—but I was to blame to suffer his brutal behaviour to ruffle my temper.—I could expect nothing else from him, and he is below my anger.—How much trouble has this odious fellow caused both to me and my poor father!—I never disobeyed him before, and my denial now makes him quite unhappy. In any thing else I would be all submission; and even now, while I dread his rage, my heart bleeds for his uneasiness—I wish I could resolve to obey him.

Enter RUSSET.

Rus. Are not you a sad girl? a perverse, stubborn, obstinate—

Har. My dear fir—

Ruf. Look ye, Harriot, don't speak,—you'll put me in a passion—Will you have him?—Answer me that—Why don't the girl speak?—Will you have him?

Har. Dearest fir, there is nothing in the world else—

Ruf. Why there!—there!—Look ye there!—Zounds, you shall have him—Hussy, you shall have him—You shall marry him to-night—Did not you promise to receive him civilly?—How came you to affront him?

Har. Sir, I did receive him very civilly: but his behaviour was so insolent and insupportable—

Ruf. Insolent! Zounds, I'll blow his brains out.—Insolent to my dear Harriot!—A rogue! a villain! a scoundrel! I'll—but it's a lie—I know it's a lie—He durst not behave insolent—Will you have him? Answer me that. Will you have him?—Zounds, you shall have him.

Har. If you have any love for me, fir—

Ruf. Love for you!—You know I love you—You know your poor fond father dotes on you to madness.—I would not force you, if I did not love you—Don't I want you to be happy?—But I know what you would have. You want young Oakly, a rake-helly, drunken—

Har. Release me from Sir Harry, and if I ever marry against your consent, renounce me for ever.

Ruf. I will renounce you, unless you'll have Sir Harry.

Har. Consider, my dear fir, you'll make me miserable. I would die to please you, but cannot prostitute my hand to a man my heart abhors.—

Absolve me from this hard command, and in every thing else it will be happiness to obey you.

Ruf. You'll break my heart, Harriot, you'll break my heart—Make you miserable!—Don't I want to make you happy? Is not he the richest man in the county?—That will make you happy. —Don't all the pale-faced girls in the country long to get him?—And yet you are so perverse, and wayward, and stubborn—Zounds, you shall have him.

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir——

Ruf. Hold your tongue, Harriot!—I'll hear none of your nonsense.—You shall have him, I tell you, you shall have him—He shall marry you this very night——I'll go for a license and a parson immediately. Zounds! Why do I stand arguing with you? An't I your father? Have not I a right to dispose of you? You shall have him.

Har. Sir——

Ruf. I won't hear a word. You shall have him.

[*Exit.*]

Har. Sir!—Hear me!—but one word!—He will not hear me, and is gone to prepare for this odious marriage. I will die before I consent to it. You *shall* have him! O that fathers would enforce their commands by better arguments! And yet I pity him, while he afflicts me.—He upbraided me with Charles, his wildness and intemperance——Alas! but too justly—I see that he is wedded to his excesses; and I ought to conquer an affection for him, which will only serve to make me unhappy.

Enter CHARLES in a Frock, &c.

Ha! What do I see!

[*Screaming.*]

Char. Peace, my love!—My dear life, make no noise!—I have been hovering about the house this hour—I just now saw your father and Sir Harry go out, and have seized this precious opportunity to throw myself at your feet.

Har. You have given yourself, fir, a great deal of needless trouble. I did not expect or hope for the favour of such a visit.

Char. O my dear Harriot, your words and looks cut me to the soul. You can't imagine what I suffer, and have suffered since last night—And yet I have in some fond moments flattered myself, that the service I was so fortunate as to do you at Lady Freelove's, would plead a little in my favour.

Har. You may remember, fir, that you took a very early opportunity of cancelling that obligation.

Char. I do remember it with shame and despair. But may I perish, if my joy at having delivered you from a villain was not the cause! My transport more than half intoxicated me, and wine made an easy conquest over me.—I tremble to think lest I should have behaved in such a manner as you cannot pardon.

Har. Whether I pardon you or no, fir, is a matter of mighty little consequence.

Char. O my Harriot! Upbraid me, reproach me, do any thing but look and talk with that air of coldness and indifference. Must I lose you for one offence? when my soul dotes on you, when I love you to distraction!

Har. Did it appear like love, your conduct yesterday? To lose yourself in riot, when I was exposed to the greatest distresses!

Char. I feel, I feel my shame, and own it.

Har. You confess that you don't know in what manner you behaved. Ought not I to tremble at the very thoughts of a man, devoted to a vice which renders him no longer a judge or master of his own conduct?

Char. Abandon me, if ever I am guilty of it again. O Harriot! I am distracted with ten thousand fears and apprehensions of losing you for ever—The chambermaid, whom I bribed to admit me to you, told me that when the two gentlemen went out, they talked of a license.—What am I to think? Is it possible that you can resign yourself to Sir Harry Beagle?—[*Harriot pauses.*]—Can you then consent to give your hand to another? No, let me once more deliver you—Let us seize this lucky moment!—My chariot stands at the corner of the next street—Let me gently force you, while their absence allows it, and convey you from the brutal violence of a constrained marriage.

Har. No!—I will wait the event, be it what it may.—O Charles, I am too much inclined—They sha'n't force me to marry Sir Harry—But your behaviour—Not half an hour ago, my father reproached me with the looseness of your character.

[*Weeping.*]

Char. I see my folly, and am ashamed of it. You have reclaimed me, Harriot!—On my soul, you have.—If all women were as attentive as yourself to the morals of their lovers, a libertine would be an uncommon character.—But let me persuade you to leave this place, while you may—Major Oakly will receive us at his house with pleasure—I

am shocked at the thoughts of what your stay here may reserve you to.

Har. No, I am determined to remain.—To leave my father again, to go off openly with a man, of whose libertine character he has himself so lately been a witness, would justify his anger, and impeach my reputation.

Char. Fool! fool! How unhappy have I made myself!—Consider, my Harriot, the peculiarity of your situation; besides I have reason to fear other designs against you.

Har. From other designs I can be no where so secure as with my father.

Char. Time flies——Let me persuade you?

Har. I am resolved to stay here.

Char. You distract me. For Heaven's sake.

Har. I will not think of it.

Char. Consider, my angel!——

Har. I do consider, that your conduct has made it absolutely improper for me to trust myself to your care.

Char. My conduct! Vexation! 'Sdeath!—But then, my dear Harriot, the danger you are in, the necessity——

Enter Chambermaid.

Chamb. O law, ma'am!—Such a terrible accident!—As sure as I am here, there's a press-gang has seized the two gemmin, and is carrying them away, thof so be one an 'em says as how he's a knight and baronight, and that t'other's a 'squire and a housekeeper.

E

Har. Seized by a prefs-gang! impossible.

Char. O, now the design comes out.—But I'll baulk his lordship.

Chamb. Lack-a-dasy, ma'am, what can we do? There is master, and John Offler, and Bootcatcher, all gone a'ter 'em.—There is such an uproar as never was. [Exit.

Har. If I thought this was your contrivance, 'fir, I would never speak to you again.

Char. I would sooner die than be guilty of it.—This is Lord Trinket's doing, I am sure. I knew he had some scheme in agitation, by a letter I intercepted this morning.

Har. [Screams.]

Char. Ha! Here he comes. Nay then, it's plain enough. Don't be frightened, my love! I'll protect you.—But now I must desire you to follow my directions.

Enter Lord TRINKET.

L. Trink. Now, madam.—Pox on't, he here again!—Nay, then, [Drawing.] come, 'fir! You're unarmed, I see. Give up the lady: give her up, I say, or I am through you in a twinkling.

[Going to make a pass at Charles.

Char. Keep your distance, my lord! I have arms. [Producing a pistol.] If you come a foot nearer, you have a brace of balls thro' your lordship's head.

L. Trink. How? what's this? pistols!

Char. At your lordship's service.—Sword and pistol my lord.—Those, you know, are our weapons.—If this misses, I have the fellow to't in my pocket.—Don't be frightened, madam. His lordship has removed your friends and relations,

but he will take great care of you. Shall I leave you with him?

Har. Cruel Charles! You know I must go with you now.

Char. A little way from the door, if your lordship pleases. [*Waving his hand.*]

L. Trink. Sir!—'Sdeath;—Madam!—

Char. A little more round, my lord. [*Waving.*]

L. Trink. But, sir!—Mr. Oakly!

Char. I have no leisure to talk with your lordship now.—A little more that way, if you please.

[*Waving.*.]—You know where I live.—If you have any commands for Miss Ruffet, you will hear of her too at my house.—Nay, keep back, my lord.

[*Presenting.*.] Your lordship's most obedient humble servant. [*Exit with Harriot.*]

L. Trink. [*Looking after them, and pausing for a short time.*.]—I cut a mighty ridiculous figure here, 'pon honour.—So I have been concerting this deep scheme, merely to serve him.—Oh, the devil take such intrigues, and all silly country girls, that can give up a man of quality and figure, for a fellow that nobody knows. [*Exit.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lady FREELOVE's House. Enter Lord TRINKET, Lady FREELOVE with a Letter, and Captain O'CUTTER.

Lord Trinket.

WAS ever any thing so unfortunate? Pox on't, captain, how could you make such a strange blunder

O'Cut. I never tought of a blunder. I was to daliver two letters, and if I gave them one a piece, I tought it was all one, fait.

L. Free. And so, my lord, the ingenious captain gave the letter intended for me to young Oakly, and here he has brought me a challenge.

L. Trink. Ridiculous! Never was any thing so *mal-apropos*.—Did you read the direction, captain?

O'Cut. Who, me!—Devil burn me, not I. I never rade at all.

L. Trink. 'Sdeath! how provoking! When I had secur'd the servants, and got all the people out of the way—When every thing was *en train*.

L. Free. Nay, never despair, my lord! Things have happened unluckily, to be sure; and yet I think I could hit upon a method to set every thing to right again.

L. Trink. How? how? my dear Lady Freelove, how?

L. Free. Suppose then your lordship was to go and deliver these country gentlemen from their confinement: make them believe it was a plot of young Oakly's to carry off my niece; and so make a merit of your own services with the father.

L. Trink. Admirable! I'll about it immediately.

O'Cut. Has your lordship any occasion for my service in this expedition?

L. Trink. O no:—Only release me these people, and then keep out of the way, dear captain.

O'Cut. With all my heart, fait. But you are all wrong:—this will not signify a brass farthing. If you would let me alone, I would give him a salt ecl,

I warrant you.—But upon my credit, there's nothing to be done without a little tilting. [Exit.

L. Free. Ha, ha! poor captain!

L. Trink. But where shall I carry them, when I have deliver'd them?

L. Free. To Mr. Oakly's, by all means. You may be sure my niece is there.

L. Trink. To Mr. Oakly's!—Why, does your ladyship consider? 'Tis going directly in the fire of the enemy—throwing the *dementi* full in their teeth.

L. Free. So much the better. Face your enemies:—nay, you shall outface them too. Why, where's the difference between truths and untruths, if you do but stick close to the point? Falsehood would scarce ever be detected, if we had confidence enough to support it.

L. Trink. Nay, I don't want *bronze* upon occasion.—But to go amongst a whole troop of people, sure, to contradict every word I say, is so dangerous——

L. Free. To leave Ruffet alone amongst them, would be ten times more dangerous. You may be sure that Oakly's will be the first place he will go to after his daughter, where, if you don't accompany him, he will be open to all their suggestions. They'll be all in one story, and nobody there to contradict them; and then their dull truth would triumph, which must not be. No, no,—positively, my lord, you must battle it out.

L. Trink. Well, I'll go, 'pon honour—and if I could depend on your ladyship as a *corps de reserve*.—

L. Free. I'll certainly meet you there. Tush! my lord, there's nothing in it. It's hard, indeed, if two persons of condition can't bear themselves out against such trumpery folks as the family of the Oaklys.

L. Trink. Odious low people!—But I lose time—I must after the captain—and so, till we meet at Mr. Oakly's, I kiss your ladyship's hand.—You won't fail me.

L. Free. You may depend on me.

[*Exit L. Trink.*]

L. Free. So, here is fine work! This artful little huffy has been too much for us all: Well, what's to be done? Why, when a woman of fashion gets into a scrape, nothing but a fashionable assurance can get her out of it again. I'll e'en go boldly to Mr. Oakly's, as I have promised, and if it appears practicable, I will forward Lord Trinket's match; but if I find that matters have taken another turn, his lordship must excuse me. In that case I'll fairly drop him, seem a perfect stranger to all his intentions, and give my visit an air of congratulation to my niece and any other husband, which fortune, her wife father, or her ridiculous self has provided for her. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

Changes to Mrs. OAKLY's Dressing-Room. Enter

Mrs. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. This is worse and worse!—He never held me so much in contempt before.—To go out

without speaking to me, or taking the least notice.
—I am obliged to the major for this. —How
could he take him out? and how could Mr. Oakly
go with him? —

Enter TOILET.

Mrs. Oak. Well, Toilet.

Toil. My master is not come back yet, ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Where is he gone?

Toil. I don't know, I can assure your ladyship.

Mrs. Oak. Why don't you know? — You know
nothing. — But I warrant you know well enough,
if you would tell. — You shall never persuade me
but you knew of Mr. Oakly's going out to-day.

Toil. I wish I may die, ma'am, upon my ho-
nour, and I protest to your ladyship, I knew no-
thing in the world of the matter, no more than the
child unborn. There is Mr. Paris, my master's
gentleman, knows —

Mrs. Oak. What does he know?

Toil. That I knew nothing at all of the matter.

Mrs. Oak. Where is Paris? What is he doing?

Toil. He is in my master's room, ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Bid him come here.

Toil. Yes, ma'am.

[Exit.

Mrs. Oak. He is certainly gone after this young
flirt. — His confidence and the major's insolence
provoke me beyond expression.

Re-enter TOILET with PARIS.

Where's your master?

Par. He's fort.

Mrs. Oak. Where is he gone?

Par. Ah, madame, *je n'en scai rien*. I know nothing of it.

Mrs. Oak. Nobody knows any thing. Why did not you tell me he was going out?

Par. I drefs him—*Je ne m'en soucie pas de plus*—He go where he will—I have no bisness wis it.

Mrs. Oak. Yes, you should have told me—that was your businefs—and if you don't mind your businefs better, you shan't stay here, I can tell you, fir.

Par. *Voilà ! quelque chose d'extraordinaire !*

Mrs. Oak. Don't stand jabbering and shrugging your shoulders, but go, and enquire—go—and bring me word where he is gone.

Par. I don't know what I am do.——I'll ask John.——

Mrs. Oak. Bid John come to me.

Par. *De tout mon cœur*.——*Jean ! ici ! Jean*—Speak my ladi. [Exit.

Mrs. Oak. Impudent fellow ! His insolent gravity and indifference is insupportable.——Toilet !

Toil. Ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Where's John ? Why don't he come ? Why do you stand with your hands before you ? Why don't you fetch him ?

Toil. Yes, ma'am,——I'll go this minute.——O, here, John ! my lady wants you.

Enter JOHN.

Mrs. Oak. Where's your master ?

John Gone out, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Why did not you go with him ?

John. Because he went out in the major's chariot, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Where did they go to?

John. To the major's, I suppose, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Suppose! Don't you know?

John. I believe so, but can't tell for certain, indeed, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Believe, and suppose!—and don't know, and can't tell!—You are all fools.—Go about your business. [*John going.*]—Come here. [*Returns.*] Go to the major's—no,—it does not signify—go along—[*John going.*]—Yes, hark'ee, [*Returns.*] go to the major's, and see if your master is there.

John. Give your compliments, madam?

Mrs. Oak. My compliments, blockhead! Get along, [*John going.*] Come hither. [*Returns.*] Can't you go to the major's, and bring me word if Mr. Oakly is there, without taking any further notice?

John. Yes, ma'am!

Mrs. Oak. Well, why don't you go then? And make haste back.—And d'ye hear, John?

[*John going, returns.*]

John. Madam.

Mrs. Oak. Nothing at all—go along—[*John goes.*]—How uneasy Mr. Oakly makes me!—Hark'e, John! [*John returns.*]

John. Madam!

Mrs. Oak. Send the porter here.

John. Yes, madam.

[*Exit.*]

Toil. So, she's in a rare humour! I shall have a fine time on't.—[*Aside.*]—Will your ladyship choose to dress?

Mrs. Oak. Pr'ythee, creature, don't tease me with your fiddle-faddle stuff—I have a thousand things to think of.——Where is the porter? Why has not that booby sent him? What is the meaning——

Re-enter JOHN.

John. Madam, my master is this moment returned with Major Oakly, and my young master, and the lady that was here yesterday.

Mrs. Oak. Very well. [*Exit John.*] Returned!—yes, truly, he is returned—and in a very extraordinary manner. This is setting me at open defiance. But I'll go down, and shew them I have too much spirit to endure such usage.—[*Going.*]—Or stay—I'll not go amongst his company—I'll go out.——Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Order the coach, I'll go out. [*Toilet going.*]——Toilet, stay,—I'll e'en go down to them——No.——Toilet.

Toil. Ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Order me a boil'd chicken—I'll not go down to dinner—I'll dine in my own room, and sup there—I'll not see his face these three days. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Changes to another Room. Enter OAKLY, Major OAKLY, CHARLES, and HARRIOT.

Char. My dear Harriot, do not make yourself so uneasy.

Har. Alas! I have too much cause for my uneasiness. Who knows what that vile lord has done with my father?

Oak. Be comforted, madam; we shall soon hear of Mr. Ruffet, and all will be well I dare say.

Har. You are too good to me, sir:—But I can assure you, I am not a little concerned on your account as well as my own; and if I did not flatter myself with hopes of explaining every thing to Mrs. Oakly's satisfaction, I should never forgive myself for having disturbed the peace of such a worthy family.

Maj. Don't mind that, madam; they'll be very good friends again. This is nothing among married people.——'Sdeath, here she is!—No,—it's only Mrs. Toilet.

Enter TOILET.

Oak. Well, Toilet, what now? [*Toilet whispers.*] Not well?—Cann't come down to dinner?—Wants to see me above?—Hark'e, brother, what shall I do?

Maj. If you go, you're undone.

Har. Go, sir; go to Mrs. Oakly—Indeed you had better——

Maj. 'Sdeath, brother! don't budge a foot—This is all fractiousness and ill-humour——

Oak. No, I'll not go.—Tell her I have company and we shall be glad to see her here. [*Exit Toilet.*]

Maj. That's right.

Oak. Suppose I go and watch how she proceeds?

Maj. What d'ye mean? You would not go to her? Are you mad?

Oak. By no means go to her—I only want to know how she takes it. I'll lie *perdue* in my study, and observe her motions.

Maj. I don't like this pitiful ambuscade work—this bush-fighting. Why can't you stay here?—Ay, ay!—I know how it will be—She'll come bounce in upon you with a torrent of anger and passion, or, if necessary, a whole flood of tears, and carry all before her at once.

Oak. You shall find that you're mistaken, major.—Don't imagine that because I wish not to be void of humanity, that I am destitute of resolution. Now I am convinced I'm in the right, I'll support that right with ten times your steadiness.

Maj. You talk this well, brother.

Oak. I'll do it well, brother.

Maj. If you don't, you're undone.

Oak. Never fear, never fear.

[*Exit.*]

Maj. Well, Charles.

Char. I can't bear to see my Harriot so uneasy. I'll go immediately in quest of Mr. Russet. Perhaps, I may learn at the inn where his lordship's ruffians have carried him.

Ruf. [*Without.*] Here? Yes, yes, I know she's here well enough. Come along, Sir Harry, come along.

Har. He's here?—My father! I know his voice. Where is Mr. Oakly? O, now, good sir, [*To the Major.*] do but pacify him, and you'll be a friend indeed.

Enter RUSSET, Lord TRINKET, and Sir HARRY BEAGLE.

L. Trink. There, sir—I told you it was so.

Ruf. Ay, ay, it is too plain.—O you provoking slut! Elopement after elopement! And at last to have your father carried off by violence! To endanger my life! Zounds! I am so angry, I dare not trust myself within reach of you.

Char. I can assure you, fir, that your daughter is entirely——

Ruf. You assure me? You are the fellow that has perverted her mind——That has set my own child against me——

Char. If you will but hear me, fir——

Ruf. I won't hear a word you say. I'll have my daughter——I won't hear a word.

Maj. Nay, Mr. Ruffet, hear reason. If you will but have patience——

Ruf. I'll have no patience—I'll have my daughter, and she shall marry Sir Harry to-night.

L. Trink. That is dealing rather too much *en cavalier* with me, Mr. Ruffet, 'pon honour. You take no notice of my pretensions, though my rank and family——

Ruf. What care I for rank and family. I don't want to make my daughter a rantipole woman of quality. I'll give her to whom I please. Take her away, Sir Harry; she shall marry you to-night.

Har. For Heaven's sake, fir, hear me but a moment.

Ruf. Hold your tongue, girl. Take her away, Sir Harry, take her away.

Char. It must not be.

Maj. Only three words, Mr. Ruffet.——

Ruf. Why don't the booby take her?

Sir H. Hold hard, hold hard! You are all on a wrong scent: Hold hard! I say, hold hard!—Hark ye, Squire Ruffet.

Ruf. Well! what now?

Sir H. It was proposed, you know, to match me with Miss Harriot.—But she can't take kindly to me.—When one has made a bad bet, it is best to hedge off, you know—and so I have e'en swopped her with Lord Trinket here for his brown horse Nabob, that he bought of Lord Whistle-Jacket for fifteen hundred guineas.

Ruf. Swopped her? Swopped my daughter for a horse? Zouns, sir, what d'ye mean?

Sir H. Mean? Why I mean to be off, to be sure—It won't do—I tell you it won't do.—First of all I knocked up myself and my horses, when they took for London—and now I have been stewed aboard a tender—I have wasted three stone at least.—If I could have rid my match, it would not have grieved me.—And so, as I said before, I have swopped her for Nabob.

Ruf. The devil take Nabob, and yourself, and Lord Trinket, and—

L. Trink. *Pardqn! je vous demande pardon, Monsieur Ruffet, 'pon honour.*

Ruf. Death and the devil! I shall go distracted. My daughter plotting against me—the—

Maj. Come, come, Mr. Ruffet, I am your man after all. Give me but a moment's hearing, and I'll engage to make peace between you and your daughter, and throw the blame where it ought to fall most deservedly.

Sir H. Ay, ay, that's right. Put the saddle on the right horse, my buck!

Ruf. Well, Sir!—What d'ye say?—Speak——
I don't know what to do——

Maj. I'll speak the truth let who will be offended by it.—I have proof presumptive and positive for you, Mr. Ruffet. From his lordship's behaviour at Lady Free love's, when my nephew rescued her, we may fairly conclude that he would stick at no measures to carry his point.—There's proof presumptive.—But, sir, we can give you proof positive too—proof under his lordship's own hand, that he, likewise, was the contriver of the gross affront that has just been offered you.

Ruf. Hey! how?

L. Trink. Every syllable romance, 'pon honour.

Maj. Gospel every word on't.

Char. This letter will convince you, sir!—In consequence of what happened at Lady Free love's, his lordship thought fit to send me a challenge: but the messenger blundered, and gave me this letter instead of it. [*Giving the letter.*] I have the case which inclosed it in my pocket.

L. Trink. Forgery, from beginning to end, 'pon honour.

Maj. Truth upon my honour.—But read, read, Mr. Ruffet, read and be convinced.

Ruf. Let me see—let me see—[*Reading.*]—Um—um—um—so, so!—um—um—um—damnation!—Wish me success—obedient slave—Trinket.—Fire and fury! How dare you do this?

L. Trink. When you are cool, Mr. Ruffet, I will explain this matter to you.

Ruf. Cool? 'Sdeath and hell!—I'll never be cool again—I'll be revenged.—So my Harriot, my dear girl is innocent at last.—Say so, my Harriot; tell me you are innocent. [*Embracing her.*]

Har. I am, indeed, fir; and happy beyond expression, at your being convinced of it.

Ruf. I am glad on't—I am glad on't—I believe you, Harriot!—You was always a good girl.

Maj. So she is, an excellent girl!—Worth a regiment of such Lords and Baronets—Come, fir, finish every thing handsomely at once.—Come—Charles will have a handsome fortune.

Ruf. Marry! She durst not do it.

Maj. Consider, fir, they have long been fond of each other—old acquaintance—faithful lovers—turbles—and may be very happy.

Ruf. Well, well—since things are so—I love my girl.—Hark'ye, young Oakly, if you don't make her a good husband, you'll break my heart, you rogue.

Char. Do not doubt it, fir! my Harriot has reformed me altogether.

Ruf. Has she?—Why then—there—Heaven bless you both—there—now there's an end on't.

Sir H. So, my lord, you and I are both distanced—A hollow thing, damme.

L. Trink. N'importe.

Sir H. [*Aside.*] Now this stake is drawn, my Lord may be for hedging off mayhap. Ecod! I'll go to Jack Speed's, and secure Nabob, and be out of town in an hour.—Soho! Lady Freelove! Yoics! [*Exit.*]

Enter Lady FREELOVE.

L. Free. My dear Miss Ruffet, you'll excuse—

Char. Mrs. Oakly, at your ladyship's service.

L. Free. Married?

Har. Not yet, madam; but my father has been so good as to give his consent.

L. Free. I protest I am prodigiously glad of it. My dear, I give you joy—and you, Mr. Oakly—I wish you joy, Mr. Ruffet, and all the good company—for I think the most of them are parties concerned.

Maj. How easy, impudent, and familiar! [*Aside.*

L. Free. Lord Trinket here too! I vow I did not see your lordship before.

L. Trink. Your ladyship's most obedient slave.

[*Bowing.*

L. Free. You seem grave, my lord!—Come, come, I know there has been some difference between you and Mr. Oakly—You must give me leave to be a mediator in this affair.

L. Trink. Here has been a small fracas to be sure, madam!—We are all blown, 'pon honour.

L. Free. Blown! What do you mean, my lord?

L. Trink. Nay, your ladyship knows that I never mind these things, and I know that they never discompose your ladyship—But things have happened a little *en travers*—The little billet I sent your ladyship has fallen into the hands of that gentleman—[*Pointing to Char.*]—and so—there has been a little *brouillerie* about it—that's all.

L. Free. You talk to me, my lord, in a very extraordinary stile—If you have been guilty of any misbehaviour, I am sorry for it; but your ill conduct can fasten no imputation on me.—Miss Ruffet will justify me sufficiently.

Maj. Had not your ladyship better appeal to my friend Charles here?—The Letter! Charles!—
Out with it this instant!

Char. Yes, I have the credentials of her ladyship's integrity in my pocket.——Mr. Ruffet, the letter you read a little while ago was inclosed in this cover, which also I now think it my duty to put into your hands.

Ruf. [*Reading.*] To the Right Honourable Lady Freelove——'Sdeath and hell!—and now I recollect, the letter itself was pieced with scraps of French, and madam, and your ladyship—Fire and fury! madam, how came you to use me so? I am obliged to you then for the insult that has been offered me.

L. Free. What is all this? Your obligations to me, Mr. Ruffet, are of a nature that——

Ruf. Fine obligations! I dare say I am partly obliged to you too for the attempt on my daughter, by that thing of a lord yonder at your house. Zouns! madam, these are injuries never to be forgiven—They are the grossest affronts to me and my family—All the world shall know them—Zouns!—I'll——

L. Free. Mercy on me! how boisterous are these country gentlemen! Why, really, Mr. Ruffet, you rave like a man in Bedlam—I am afraid you'll beat me—and then you swear most abominably.—How can you be so vulgar?——I see the meaning of this low malice——But the reputations of women of quality are not so easily impeached—My rank places me above the scandal of little people, and I shall meet such petty insolence with the greatest ease and tranquillity. But you and your simple girl will be the sufferers.——I had some thoughts of intro-

ducing her into the first company—But now, madam, I shall neither receive nor return your visits, and will entirely withdraw my protection from the ordinary part of the family. [Exit.]

Ruf. Zouns, what impudence! that's worse than all the rest.

L. Trink. Fine presence of mind, faith!—The true French *nonchalance*—But, good folks, why such a deal of rout and *tapage* about nothing at all? —If Mademoiselle Harriot had rather be Mrs. Oakly than Lady Trinket—Why—I wish her joy, that's all.—Mr. Rufflet, I wish you joy of your son-in-law—Mr. Oakly, I wish you joy of the lady—and you, madam, [*To Harriot.*] of the gentleman—And, in short, I wish you all joy of one another, 'pon honour! [Exit.]

Ruf. There's a fine fellow of a lord now! The devil's in your London-folks of the first fashion, as you call them. They will rob you of your estate, debauch your daughter, or lie with your wife—and all as if they were doing you a favour—'pon honour!

Maj. Hey! what now? [*Bell rings violently.*]

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. D'ye hear, major, d'ye hear?

Maj. Zouns! what a clatter!—She'll pull down all the bells in the house.

Oak. My observations since I left you have confirmed my resolution. I see plainly, that her good-humour, and her ill-humour, her smiles, her tears, and her fits, are all calculated to play upon me.

Maj. Did not I always tell you so? It's the way with them all—they will be rough and smooth, and hot and cold, and all in a breath. Any thing to get the better of us.

Oak. She is in all moods at present, I promise you—I am at once angry and ashamed of her; and yet she is so ridiculous I can't help laughing at her—There has she been in her chamber, fuming and fretting, and dispatching a messenger to me every two minutes—servant after servant—now she insists on my coming to her—now again she writes a note to intreat—then Toilet is sent to let me know that she is ill, absolutely dying—then, the very next minute, she'll never see my face again—she'll go out of the house directly. [*Bell rings.*] Again! now the storm rises!—

Maj. It will soon drive this way then—now, brother, prove yourself a man—You have gone too far to retreat.

Oak. Retreat!—Retreat!—No, no!—I'll preserve the advantage I have gained, I am determined.

Maj. Ay, ay!—keep your ground!—fear nothing—up with your noble heart! Good discipline makes good soldiers; stick close to my advice, and you may stand buff to a tigress——

Oak. Here she is, by heavens!—now, brother!

Maj. And now, brother!—Now or never!

Enter Mrs. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. I think, Mr. Oakly, you might have had humanity enough to have come to see how I did. You have taken your leave, I suppose, of all tenderness and affection—but I'll be calm—I'll

not throw myself into a passion—you want to drive me out of your house—I see what you aim at, and will be beforehand with you—let me keep my temper! I'll send for a chair, and leave the house this instant.

Oak. True, my love! I knew you would not think of dining in your own chamber alone, when I had company below. You shall sit at the head of the table, as you ought to be sure, as you say, and make my friends welcome.

Mrs. Oak. Excellent raillery! Look ye, Mr. Oakly, I see the meaning of all this affected coolness and indifference.

Oak. My dear, consider where you are——

Mrs. Oak. You would be glad, I find, to get me out of your house, and have all your flirts about you.

Oak. Before all this company! Fie!

Mrs. Oak. But I'll disappoint you, for I shall remain in it to support my due authority—as for you, Major Oakly!

Maj. Hey-day! What have I done?

Mrs. Oak. I think you might find better employment, than to create divisions between married people—and you, sir——

Oak. Nay, but my dear!——

Mrs. Oak. Might have more sense, as well as tenderness, than to give ear to such idle stuff.——

Oak. Lord, lord!

Mrs. Oak. You and your wife counsellor there, I suppose, think to carry all your points with me.——

Oak. Was ever any thing——

Mrs. Oak. But it won't do, sir. You shall find that I will have my own way, and that I will govern my own family.

Oak. You had better learn to govern yourself by half. Your passion makes you ridiculous. Did ever any body see so much fury and violence; affronting your best friends, breaking my peace, and disconcerting your own temper. And all for what? For nothing. 'Sdeath, madam! at these years you ought to know better.

Mrs. Oak. At these years!—Very fine!—Am I to be talk'd to in this manner?

Oak. Talk'd to!—Why not?—You have talk'd to me long enough—almost talk'd me to death—and I have taken it all in hopes of making you quiet—but all in vain; for the more one bears, the worse you are. Patience, I find, is all thrown away upon you; and henceforward, come what may, I am resolv'd to be master of my own house.

Mrs. Oak. So, so!—Master, indeed!—Yes, sir, and you'll take care to have mistresses enough too, I warrant you.

Oak. Perhaps I may; but they shall be quiet ones, I can assure you.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed!—And do you think I am such a tame fool as to sit quietly and bear all this? You shall know, sir, that I will resent this behaviour—You shall find that I have a spirit——

Oak. Of the devil.

Mrs. Oak. Intolerable!—You shall find then that I will exert that spirit. I am sure I have need of it. As soon as the house is once cleared again, I'll shut my doors against all company.—You shan't see a single soul for this month.

Oak. 'Sdeath, madam, but I will!—I'll keep open house for a year.—I'll send cards to the whole town—Mr. Oakly's route!—All the world will come—and I'll go among the world too—I'll be mew'd up no longer.

Mrs. Oak. Provoking insolence! This is not to be endured.—Look'e, Mr. Oakly—

Oak. And look'e, Mrs. Oakly, I will have my own way.

Mrs. Oak. Nay then, let me tell you, fir—

Oak. And let me tell you, madam, I will not be crossed—I won't be made a fool.

Mrs. Oak. Why, you won't let me speak.

Oak. Because you don't speak as you ought. Madam, madam! you shan't look, nor walk, nor talk, nor think, but as I please.

Mrs. Oak. Was there ever such a monster! I can bear this no longer. [*Bursts into tears.*] O you vile man! I can see through your design—you cruel, barbarous, inhuman—such usage to your poor wife!—you'll be the death of her.

Oak. She shan't be the death of me, I am determined.

Mrs. Oak. That it should ever come to this!—To be contradicted—[*Sobbing.*]—insulted—abused—hated—'tis too much—my heart will burst with—oh—oh!—[*Falls into a fit.* Harriot, Charles, &c. runs to her assistance.]

Oak. [*Interposing.*] Let her alone.

Har. Sir, Mrs. Oakly—

Char. For Heaven's sake, fir, she will be—

Oak. Let her alone, I say; I won't have her touched—let her alone—if her passions throw her

into fits, let the strength of them carry her through them.

Har. Pray, my dear sir, let us assist her. She may——

Oak. I don't care—you shan't touch her—let her bear them patiently—she'll learn to behave better another time.—Let her alone, I say.

Mrs. Oak. [*Rising.*] O you monster!—you villain!—you base man!—Would you let me die for want of help?—would you——

Oak. Bless me! madam, your fit is very violent—take care of yourself.

Mrs. Oak. Despised, ridiculed—but I'll be revenged—you shall see, sir——

Oak. *Tol-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll.* [*Singing.*

Mrs. Oak. What, am I made a jest of? Exposed to all the world?—If there's law or justice——

Oak. *Tol-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll.* [*Singing.*

Mrs. Oak. I shall burst with anger.—Have a care, sir, you may repent this.—Scorned and made ridiculous!—No power on earth shall hinder my revenge!

[*Going.*

Har. [*Interposing.*] Stay, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Let me go. I cannot bear this place.

Har. Let me beseech you, madam.

Oak. What does the girl mean? [*Apart.*

Maj. Courage, brother! you have done wonders.

[*Apart.*

Oak. I think she'll have no more fits. [*Apart.*

Har. Stay, madam.—Pray stay but one moment. I have been a painful witness of your uneasiness, and in great part the innocent occasion of it. Give me leave then——

Mrs. Oak. I did not expect indeed to have found you here again. But however——

Har. I see the agitation of your mind, and it makes me miserable. Suffer me to tell you the real truth. I can explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Mrs. Oak. May be so—I cannot argue with you.

Char. Pray, madam, hear her—for my sake—for your own—dear madam!

Mrs. Oak. Well——well——proceed.

Oak. I shall relapse, I can't bear to see her so uneasy. [Apart.

Maj. Hush!———Hush! [Apart.

Har. I understand, madam, that your first alarm was occasioned by a letter from my father to your nephew.

Ruf. I was in a bloody passion to be sure, madam!—The letter was not over-civil, I believe—I did not know but the young rogue had ruined my girl.—But it's all over now, and so——

Mrs. Oak. You was here yesterday, sir?

Ruf. Yes, I came after Harriot. I thought I should find my young madam, with my young sir, here.

Mrs. Oak. With Charles, did you say? sir.

Ruf. Ay, with Charles, madam! The young rogue has been fond of her a long time, and she of him, it seems.

Mrs. Oak. I fear I have been to blame. [Aside.

Ruf. I ask pardon, madam, for the disturbance I made in your house.

Har. And the abrupt manner in which I came into it, demands a thousand apologies. But the occasion must be my excuse.

Mrs. Oak. How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*
—But did not I overhear you and Mr. Oakly—

[*To Harriot.*

Har. Dear madam! you had but a partial hearing of our conversation. It related entirely to this gentleman.

—*Char.* To put it beyond doubt, madam, Mr. Ruffet and my guardian have consented to our marriage; and we are in hopes that you will not withhold your approbation.

Mrs. Oak. I have no further doubt—I see you are innocent, and it was cruel to suspect you—You have taken a load of anguish off my mind—and yet your kind interposition comes too late, Mr. Oakly's love for me is entirely destroyed.

[*Weeping.*

—*Oak.* I must go to her—

[*Apart.*

Maj. Not yet!—Not yet!

[*Apart.*

Har. Do not disturb yourself with such apprehensions, I am sure Mr. Oakly loves you most affectionately.

Oak. I can hold no longer. [*Going to her.*] My affection for you madam, is as warm as ever. Nothing can ever extinguish it. My constrained behaviour cut me to the soul—For within these few hours it has been all constrained—and it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to support it.

Mrs. Oak. O, Mr. Oakly, how have I exposed myself? What low arts has my jealousy induced me to practise! I see my folly, and fear that you can never forgive me.

Oak. Forgive you!—You are too good my love! —Forgive you!—Can you forgive me?—This change transports me.—Brother! Mr. Ruffet!

Charles! Harriot! give me joy!—I am the happiest man in the world.

Maj. Joy, much joy to you both! though by-the-bye, you are not a little obliged to me for it. Did not I tell you I would cure all the disorders in your family? I beg pardon, sister, for taking the liberty to prescribe for you. My medicines have been somewhat rough, I believe, but they have had an admirable effect, and so don't be angry with your physician.

Mrs. Oak. I am indeed obliged to you, and I feel—

Oak. Nay, my dear, no more of this. All that's past must be utterly forgotten.

Mrs. Oak. I have not merited this kindness, but it shall hereafter be my study to deserve it. Away with all idle jealousies! And since my suspicions have hitherto been groundless, I am resolved for the future never to suspect at all.

EPILOGUE.

LADIES! *I've had a squabble with the Poet—
About his characters—and you shall know it.
Young man, said I, restrain your saucy satire!
My part's ridiculous—false—out of nature.
Fine draughts indeed of ladies! sure you hate 'em!
Why, sir!—My part is scandalum magnatum.
“Lord, ma'am, said he, to copy life my trade is,
And Poets ever have made free with ladies:
One Simon—the deuce take such names as these!
A hard Greek name—O—ay—Simonides—
He shew'd—our freaks, this whim and that desire,
Rose first from earth, sea, air, nay, some from fire;
Or that we owe our persons, minds, and features
To birds, forsooth, and filthy four-legg'd creatures.*

*The dame, of manners various, temper fickle,
Now all for pleasure, now the conventicle!
Who prays, then raves, now calm, now all commotion,
Rises another Venus from the ocean.*

*Constant at every sale, the curious fair,
Who longs for Dresden, and old China ware;
Who dotes on pagods, and gives up vile man
For niddle-noddle figures from Japan;
Critic in jars and josses, shews her birth
Drawn, like the brittle ware itself, from earth.*

*The flaunting she, so stately, rich, and vain,
Who gains her conquests by her length of train;*



*While all her vanity is under sail,
Sweeps a proud peacock, with a gaudy tail.*

*Husband and wife, with sweets! and dears! and loves!
What are they but a pair of cooing doves?
But seiz'd with spleen, fits, humours, and all that,
Your dove and turtle turn to dog and cat.*

*The gossip, prude, old maid, coquette, and trapes,
Are parrots, foxes, magpies, wasps, and apes;
But she, with ev'ry charm of form and mind,
Oh! She's—sweet soul—the phoenix of her kind."*

*This his apology!——'Tis rank abuse——
A fresh affront, instead of an excuse!
His own sex rather such description suits:
Why don't he draw their characters——The brutes!
Ay, let him paint those ugly monsters, men!
Mean time——mend we our lives, he'll mend his pen.*

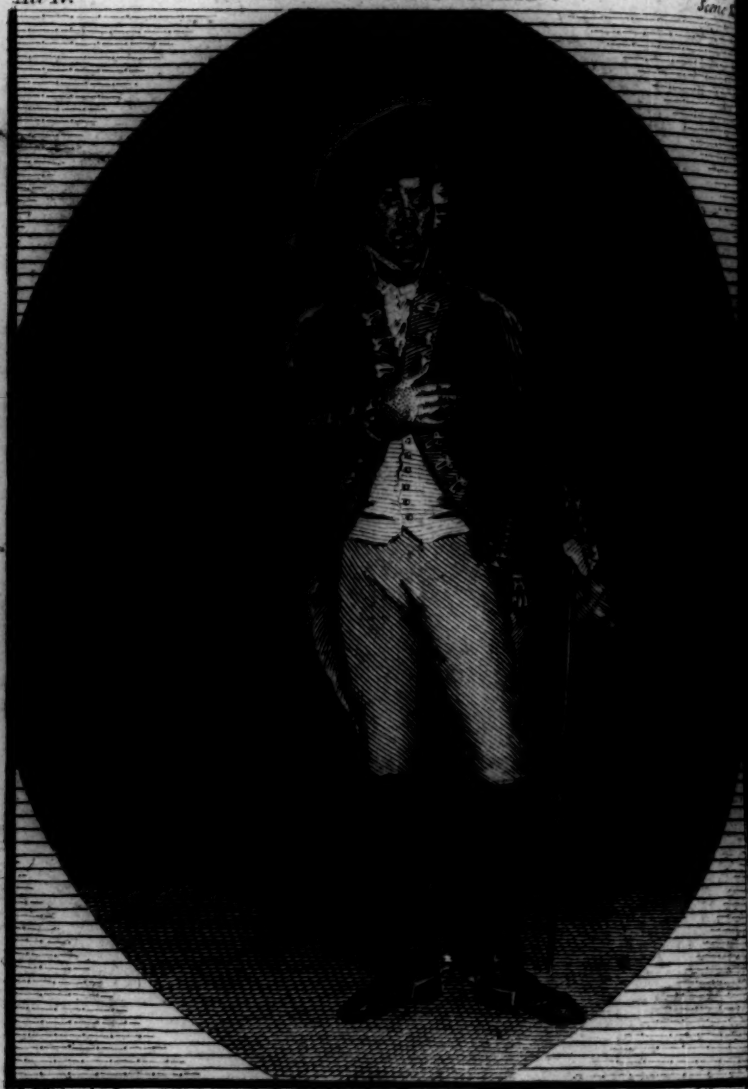




Act IV.

THE WEST INDIAN.

Scene II.



Engraved by J. Smith

Printed by J. Smith

MR. JOHNSTONE as MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.

None is not the Country of dishonour.

Dublin Publish'd by W. Jones N^o 36 Dame Street.



THE WEST INDIAN.

Containing a Description and History of the West Indies, and the Islands adjacent to them.

Dublin Published by W Jones N: 86 Dame Street.



THE
WEST INDIAN.

A
COMEDY.

By RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

Dramatist.

[Single Play]

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRES-ROYAL,
DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS.

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY J. CHAMBERS,
FOR WILLIAM JONES, No. 86, DAME-STREET.

M DCC XCV.

WEST INDIAN

COMEDY

BY HENRY JAMES



PROPERTY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

RECEIVED FROM THE

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. REDDISH.

*CRITICS, bark forward! noble game and new;
A fine West Indian started full in view:
Hot as the soil, the clime, which gave him birth;
You'll run him on a burning scent to earth;
Yet don't devour him in his hiding place;
Bag him, he'll serve you for another chase;
For sure that country has no feeble claim,
Which swells your commerce, and supports your fame.
And in this humble sketch, we hope you'll find
Some emanations of a noble mind;
Some little touches, which, tho' void of art,
May find perhaps their way into the heart.
Another hero your excuse implores,
Sent by your sister kingdom to your shores;
Doom'd by Religion's too severe command,
To fight for bread against his native land:
A brave, unthinking, animated rogue,
With here and there a touch upon the brogue.
Laugh, but despise him not, for on his lip
His errors lie; his heart can never trip.
Others there are—but may we not prevail
To let the gentry tell their own plain tale?
Shall they come in? They'll please you, if they can;
If not, condemn the bard—but spare the Man.
For speak, think, act, or write in angry times,
A wish to please is made the worst of crimes:
Dire slander now with black envenom'd dart,
Stands ever arm'd to stab you to the heart.*

*Rouse, Britons, rouse, for honour of your isle
Your old good humour ; and be seen to smile.
You say we write not like our fathers——true,
Nor were our fathers half so strict as you,
Damn'd not each error of the poet's pen,
But, judging man, remember'd they were men.
Aw'd into silence by the time's abuse,
Sleeps many a wise, and many a witty muse :
We that for mere experiment come out,
Are but the light arm'd rangers on the scout :
High on Parnassus' lofty summit stands
The immortal camp ; there lie the chosen bands.
But give fair quarter to us puny elves,
The giants then will sally forth themselves ;
With wit's sharp weapons vindicate the age,
And drive ev'n Arthur's magic from the Stage.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DRURY-LANE.

Men.

STOCKWELL,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Aickin.
BELCOUR,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Bannister, jun.
Captain DUDLEY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Packer.
CHARLES DUDLEY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Barrymore.
Major O'FLAHERTY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Moody.
STUKELY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Benson.
FULMER,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Suett.
VARLAND,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Baddeley.
Sailor,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Jones.
Servant to Stockwell,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Alfred.
Servant to Lady Rusport,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Lyons.

Women.

Lady RUSPORT,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Hopkins.
CHARLOTTE RUSPORT,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Goodall.
LOUISA, daughter to Dudley,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Kemble.
Mrs. FULMER,	-	-	-	-	Miss Tidswell.
LUCY,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Shaw.
Housekeeper belonging to Stockwell,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Heard.

Clerks belonging to Stockwell, Servants, Sailors, Negroes, &c.

SCENE, London.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

STOCKWELL,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Aickin.
BELCOUR,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Lewis.
Captain DUDLEY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Hull.
CHARLES DUDLEY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farren.
Major O'FLAHERTY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Johnstone.
STUKELY,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Gardner.
FULMER,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Thompson.
VARLAND,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Quick.
Servant to Stockwell,	-	-	-	-	Mr. Ledger.

Women.

Lady RUSPORT,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Webb.
CHARLOTTE RUSPORT,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Abington.
LOUISA, daughter to Dudley,	-	-	-	-	Miss Tweedale.
Mrs. FULMER,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Davenett.
LUCY,	-	-	-	-	Miss Stuart.
Housekeeper belonging to Stockwell,	-	-	-	-	Mrs. White.

Clerks belonging to Stockwell, Servants, Sailors, Negroes, &c.

SCENE, London.

THE
WEST INDIAN.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Merchant's Compting-House. In an inner Room, set off by Glass-Doors, are discovered several Clerks, employed at their Desks. A Writing-Table in the front Room. STOCKWELL is discovered, reading a Letter; STUKELY comes gently out of the back Room, and observes him some Time before he speaks.

Stukely.

HE seems disorder'd: something in that letter, and I'm afraid of an unpleasant sort. He has many ventures of great account at sea; a ship richly freighted for Barcelona; another for Lisbon; and others expected from Cadiz of still greater value. Besides these, I know he has many deep concerns in foreign bottoms, and underwritings to a vast amount. I'll accost him. Sir! Mr. Stockwell!

Stock. Stukely!——Well, have you shipp'd the cloths?

Stuke. I have, sir; here's the bill of lading, and copy of the invoice: the assortments are all compared: Mr. Traffick will give you the policy upon 'Change.

Stock. 'Tis very well; lay these papers by; and no more of business for a while. Shut the door, Stukely: I have had long proof of your friendship and fidelity to me; a matter of most infinite concern lies on my mind; and 'twill be a sensible relief to unbother myself to you; I have just now been informed of the arrival of the young West Indian, I have so long been expecting; you know whom I mean.

Stuke. Yes, sir; Mr. Belcour, the young gentleman who inherited old Belcour's great estates in Jamaica.

Stock. Hush, not so loud; come a little nearer this way. This Belcour is now in London; part of his baggage is already arrived; and I expect him every minute. Is it to be wondered at, if his coming throws me into some agitation, when I tell you, Stukely, he is my son?

Stuke. Your son?

Stock. Yes, sir, my only son; early in life I accompanied his grandfather to Jamaica as his clerk; he had an only daughter, somewhat older than myself, the mother of this gentleman: it was my chance (call it good or ill) to engage her affections; and, as the inferiority of my condition made it hopeless to expect her father's consent, her fondness provided an expedient, and we were privately married: the issue of that concealed engagement is, as I have told you, this Belcour.

Stuke. That event, surely, discovered your connection?

Stock. You shall hear. Not many days after our marriage, old Belcour set out for England; and,

during his abode here, my wife was, with great secrecy, delivered of this son. Fruitful in expedients to disguise her situation, without parting from her infant, she contrived to have it laid and received at her door as a foundling. After some time her father returned, having left me here; in one of those favourable moments, that decide the fortunes of prosperous men, this child was introduced: from that instant, he treated him as his own, gave him his name, and brought him up in his family.

Stuke. And did you never reveal this secret, either to old Belcour, or your son?

Stock. Never.

Stuke. Therein you surprise me; a merchant of your eminence, and a member of the British parliament, might surely aspire, without offence, to the daughter of a planter. In this case too, natural affection would prompt to a discovery.

Stock. Your remark is obvious; nor could I have persisted in this painful silence, but in obedience to the dying injunctions of a beloved wife. The letter, you found me reading, conveyed those injunctions to me; it was dictated in her last illness, and almost in the article of death (you'll spare me the recital of it); she there conjures me, in terms as solemn as they are affecting, never to reveal the secret of our marriage, or withdraw my son, while her father survived.

Stuke. But on what motives did your unhappy lady found these injunctions?

Stock. Principally, I believe, from apprehension on my account, lest old Belcour, on whom at her decease I wholly depended, should withdraw his pro-

tection; in part from consideration of his repose, as well knowing the discovery would deeply affect his spirit, which was haughty, vehement, and unforgiving: and lastly, in regard to the interest of her infant, whom he had warmly adopted; and for whom, in case of a discovery, every thing was to be dreaded from his resentment. And, indeed, though the alteration in my condition might have justified me in discovering myself, yet I always thought my son safer intrusting to the caprice than to the justice of his grand-father. My judgment has not suffer'd by the event; old Belcour is dead, and has bequeathed his whole estate to him we are speaking of.

Stuke. Now, then, you are no longer bound to secrecy.

Stock. True: but before I publicly reveal myself, I could wish to make some experiment of my son's disposition: this can only be done by letting his spirit take its course without restraint: by these means, I think I shall discover much more of his real character, under the title of his merchant, than I should under that of his father.

SCENE II.

A Sailor enters, ushering in several black servants, carrying portmanteaus, trunks, &c.

Sail. Save your honour—is your name Stockwell, pray?

Stock. It is.

Sail. Part of my master Belcour's baggage, an't please you: there's another cargo not far a-stern of

us, and the cock-fswain has got charge of the dumb creatures.

Stock. Pr'ythee, friend, what dumb creatures do you speak of? has Mr. Belcour brought over a collection of wild beasts?

Sail. No, lord love him; no, not he: let me see; there's two green monkies, a pair of grey parrots, a Jamaica sow and pigs, and a Mangrove dog; that's all.

Stock. Is that all?

Sail. Yes, your honour; yes, that's all; bless his heart, a'might have brought over the whole island if he would; a'didn't leave a dry eye in it.

Stock. Indeed! Stukely, shew 'em where to bestow their baggage. Follow that gentleman.

Sail. Come, bear a hand, my lads, bear a hand.

[Exit with Stukely and servants.]

Stock. If the principal tallies with his purveyors, he must be a singular spectacle in this place: he has a friend, however, in this sea-faring fellow; 'tis no bad prognostic of a man's heart, when his shipmates give him a good word.

SCENE III.

Changes to a Drawing-Room. A Servant discovered setting the Chairs by, &c. A Woman Servant enters to him.

Houfek. Why, what a fuss does our good master put himself in about this West Indian: see what a bill of fare I've been forced to draw out: seven and

nine, I'll assure you, and only a family dinner as he calls it: why if my Lord Mayor was expected, there couldn't be a greater to do about him.

Serv. I wish to my heart you had but seen the loads of trunks, boxes, and portmanteaus he has sent hither. An ambassador's baggage, with all the smuggled goods of his family, does not exceed it.

Houfek. A fine pickle he'll put the house into: had he been master's own son, and a Christian Englishman, there couldn't be more rout than there is about this Creolian, as they call 'em.

Serv. No matter for that; he's very rich, and that's sufficient. They say he has rum and sugar enough belonging to him, to make all the water in the Thames into punch. But I see my master's coming. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

STOCKWELL enters, followed by a Servant.

Stock. Where is Mr. Belcour? Who brought this note from him?

Serv. A waiter from the London Tavern, sir; he says the young gentleman is just dress'd, and will be with you directly.

Stock. Shew him in when he arrives.

Serv. I shall, sir. I'll have a peep at him first, however; I've a great mind to see this outlandish spark. The sailor fellow says he'll make rare doings amongst us. [*Aside.*]

Stock. You need not wait; leave me.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Let me see——

[*Reads.*]

'SIR,

'I write to you under the hands of the hair-dresser; as soon as I have made myself decent, and slipped on some fresh clothes, I will have the honour of paying you my devoirs.

'Yours,

'BELCOUR.'

He writes at his ease; for he's unconscious to whom his letter is addressed; but what a palpitation does it throw my heart into; a father's heart. 'Tis an affecting interview; when my eyes meet a son, whom yet they never saw, where shall I find constancy to support it. Should he resemble his mother, I am overthrown. All the letters I have had from him (for I industriously drew him into a correspondence with me), bespeak him of quick and ready understanding. All the reports I ever received, give me favourable impressions of his character; wild, perhaps, as the manner of his country is, but, I trust, not frantic or unprincipled.

SCENE V.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, the foreign gentleman is come.

Another Servant.

Serv. Mr. Belcour.

BELCOUR *enters.*

Stock. Mr. Belcour, I'm rejoiced to see you; you're welcome to England.

Bel. I thank you heartily, good Mr. Stockwell:—you and I have long conversed at a distance; now we are met; and the pleasure this meeting gives me, amply compensates for the perils I have run through in accomplishing it.

Stock. What perils, Mr. Belcour? I could not have thought you would have made a bad passage at this time o' year.

Bel. Nor did we: courier like, we came posting to your shores, upon the pinions of the swiftest gales that ever blew; 'tis upon English ground all my difficulties have arisen; 'tis the passage from the river-side I complain of.

Stock. Ay, indeed! What obstructions can you have met between this and the river-side?

Bel. Innumerable! Your town's as full of defiles as the Island of Corsica; and, I believe, they are as obstinately defended: so much hurry, bustle, and confusion on your quays; so many sugar-casks, porter-butts, and common-council men in your streets, that, unless a man marched with artillery in his front, 'tis more than the labour of a Hercules can effect, to make any tolerable way through your town.

Stock. I am sorry you have been so incommoded.

Bel. Why, faith, 'twas all my own fault: accustomed to a land of slaves, and out of patience with the whole tribe of custom-house extortioners, boat-men, tide-waiters, and water-bailiffs, that beset me on all sides, worse than a swarm of musketoes, I proceeded a little too roughly to brush them away with my rattan; the sturdy rogues took this in dudgeon, and beginning to rebel, the mob chose diffe-

rent sides, and a furious scuffle ensued; in the course of which, my person and apparel suffered so much, that I was obliged to step into the first tavern to refit, before I could make my approaches in any decent trim.

Stock. All without is as I wish; dear Nature, add the rest, and I am happy.—[*Aside.*]—Well, Mr. Belcour, 'tis a rough sample you have had of my countrymen's spirit; but, I trust, you'll not think the worse of them for it.

Bel. Not at all, not at all; I like 'em the better; was I only a visitor, I might, perhaps, wish them a little more tractable; but, as a fellow subject, and a sharer in their freedom, I applaud their spirit, tho' I feel the effects of it in every bone of my skin.

Stock. That's well: I like that well. How gladly I could fall upon his neck, and own myself his father! [*Aside.*

Bel. Well, Mr. Stockwell, for the first time in my life, here am I in England; at the fountain head of pleasure, in the land of beauty, of arts, and elegancies. My happy stars have given me a good estate, and the conspiring winds have blown me hither to spend it.

Stock. To use it, not to waste it, I should hope: to treat it, Mr. Belcour, not as a vassal, over whom you have a wanton and a despotic power; but as a subject, which you are bound to govern with a temperate and restrained authority.

Bel. True, sir: most truly said; mine's a commission, not a right: I am the offspring of distress, and every child of sorrow is my brother; while I have hands to hold, therefore, I will hold them open

to mankind: but, sir, my passions are my masters; they take me where they will; and oftentimes they leave to reason and to virtue nothing but my wishes and my sighs.

Stock. Come, come, the man who can accuse corrects himself.

Bel. Ah! that's an office I am weary of: I wish a friend would take it up; I would to Heaven you had leisure for the employ; but did you drive a trade to the four corners of the world, you would not find the task so tedious as to keep me free from faults.

Stock. Well, I am not discouraged: this candour tells me I should not have the fault of self-conceit to combat; that, at least, is not amongst the number.

Bel. No; if I knew that man on earth who thought more humbly of me than I do of myself, I would take up his opinion, and forego my own.

Stock. And, was I to choose a pupil, it should be one of your complexion: so, if you'll come along with me, we'll agree upon your admission, and enter on a course of lectures directly.

Bel. With all my heart.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Changes to a Room in Lady RUSPORT's House. Enter Lady RUSPORT and CHARLOTTE.

L. Ruf. Miss Rusport, I desire to hear no more of Captain Dudley and his destitute family: not a shilling of mine shall ever cross the hands of any of them: because my sister chose to marry a beggar, am I bound to support him and his posterity?

Char. I think you are.

L. Ruf. You think I am; and pray where do you find the law that tells you so?

Char. I am not proficient enough to quote chapter and verse; but I take charity to be a main clause in the great statute of christianity.

L. Ruf. I say charity, indeed! And pray, miss, are you sure that it is charity, pure charity, which moves you to plead for Captain Dudley? Amongst all your pity, do you find no spice of a certain anti-spiritual passion, called love? Don't mistake yourself; you are no saint, child, believe me; and, I am apt to think, the distresses of Old Dudley, and of his daughter into the bargain, would never break your heart, if there was not a certain young fellow of two and twenty in the case; who, by the happy recommendation of a good person, and the brilliant appointments of an ensigncy, will, if I am not mistaken, cozen you out of a fortune of twice twenty thousand pounds, as soon as ever you are of age to bestow it upon him.

Char. A nephew of your ladyship's can never want any other recommendation with me: and, if my partiality for Charles Dudley is acquitted by the rest of the world, I hope Lady Rusport will not condemn me for it.

L. Ruf. I condemn you! I thank Heaven, Miss Rusport, I am no ways responsible for your conduct; nor is it any concern of mine how you dispose of yourself: you are not my daughter; and, when I married your father, poor Sir Stephen Rusport, I found you a forward spoiled miss of fourteen, far above being instructed by me.

Char. Perhaps your ladyship calls this instruction.

L. Ruf. You're strangely pert; but 'tis no wonder: your mother, I'm told, was a fine lady; and according to the modern stile of education you was brought up. It was not so in my young days; there was then some decorum in the world, some subordination, as the great Locke expresses it. Oh! 'twas an edifying sight, to see the regular deportment observed in our family: no giggling, no gossiping was going on there; my good father, Sir Oliver Roundhead, never was seen to laugh himself, nor ever allowed it in his children.

Char. Ay; those were happy times indeed.

L. Ruf. But, in this forward age, we have coquettes in the egg-shell, and philosophers in the cradle; girls of fifteen that lead the fashion in new caps and new opinions, that have their sentiments and their sensations; and the idle fops encourage 'em in it: O' my conscience, I wonder what it is the men can see in such babies.

Char. True, madam; but all men do not overlook the maturer beauties of your ladyship's age, witness your admirer Major Dennis O'Flaherty; there's an example of some discernment; I declare to you, when your ladyship is by, the major takes no more notice of me than if I was part of the furniture of your chamber.

L. Ruf. The major, child, has travelled through various kingdoms and climates, and has more enlarged notions of female merit than falls to the lot of an English home-bred lover; in most other countries, no woman on your side forty would ever be named in a polite circle.

Char. Right, madam; I've been told that in Vienna they have coquettes upon crutches, and Venuses in their grand climacteric; a lover there celebrates the wrinkles, not the dimples, in his mistress's face. The major, I think, has served in the Imperial army.

L. Ruf. Are you piqu'd, my young madam? Had my sister, Louisa, yielded to the addresses of one of Major O'Flaherty's person and appearance, she would have had some excuse: but to run away, as she did, at the age of sixteen too, with a man of old Dudley's sort——

Char. Was, in my opinion, the most venial trespass that ever girl of sixteen committed; of a noble family, an engaging person, strict honour, and sound understanding, what accomplishment was there wanting in Captain Dudley, but that which the prodigality of his ancestors had deprived him of?

L. Ruf. They left him as much as he deserves; hasn't the old man captain's half pay? And is not the son an ensign?

Char. An ensign! Alas, poor Charles! Would to Heaven he knew what my heart feels and suffers for his sake.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Ensign Dudley to wait upon your ladyship.

L. Ruf. Who? Dudley! What can have brought him to town?

Char. Dear madam, 'tis Charles Dudley, 'tis your nephew.

L. Ruf. Nephew! I renounce him as my nephew; Sir Oliver renounced him as his grandson:

wasn't he son of the eldest daughter, and only male descendant of Sir Oliver; and didn't he cut him off with a shilling? Didn't the poor dear good man leave his whole fortune to me, except a small annuity to my maiden sister, who spoiled her constitution with nursing him? And, depend upon it, not a penny of that fortune shall ever be disposed of otherwise than according to the will of the donor.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

So, young man, whence come you? What brings you to town?

Charles. If there is any offence in my coming to town, your ladyship is in some degree responsible for it, for part of my errand was to pay my duty here.

L. Ruf. I hope you have some better excuse than all this.

Charles. 'Tis true, madam, I have other motives; but, if I consider my trouble repaid by the pleasure I now enjoy, I should hope my aunt would not think my company the less welcome, for the value I set upon hers.

L. Ruf. Coxcomb! And where is your father, child; and your sister? Are they in town too?

Charles. They are.

L. Ruf. Ridiculous! I don't know what people do in London, who have no money to spend in it.

Char. Dear madam, speak more kindly to your nephew; how can you oppress a youth of his sensibility?

L. Ruf. Miss Rusport, I insist upon your retiring to your apartment; when I want your advice I'll

send to you. [*Exit Charlotte.*] So, you have put on a red coat too, as well as your father; 'tis plain what value you set upon the good advice Sir Oliver used to give you; how often has he cautioned you against the army?

Charles. Had it pleased my grandfather to enable me to have obeyed his caution, I would have done it; but you well know how destitute I am; and 'tis not to be wonder'd at if I prefer the service of my king to that of any other master.

L. Ruf. Well, well, take your own course; 'tis no concern of mine: you never consulted me.

Charles. I frequently wrote to your ladyship, but could obtain no answer; and, since my grandfather's death, this is the first opportunity I have had of waiting upon you.

L. Ruf. I must desire you not to mention the death of that dear good man in my hearing, my spirits cannot support it.

Charles. I shall obey you: permit me to say, that, as that event has richly supplied you with the materials of bounty, the distresses of my family can furnish you with objects of it.

L. Ruf. The distresses of your family, child, are quite out of the question at present; had Sir Oliver been pleased to consider them, I should have been well content; but he has absolutely taken no notice of you in his will, and that to me must and shall be a law. Tell your father and your sister I totally disapprove of their coming up to town.

Charles. Must I tell my father that before your ladyship knows the motive that brought him hither? Allur'd by the offer of exchanging for a commission

on full pay, the veteran, after thirty years service, prepares to encounter the fatal heats of Senegambia ; but wants a small supply to equip him for the expedition.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Major O'Flaherty to wait on your ladyship.

Enter Major O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. Spare your speeches, young man ; don't you think her ladyship can take my word for that ? I hope, madam, 'tis evidence enough of my being present, when I've the honour of telling you so myself.

L. Ruf. Major O'Flaherty, I am rejoiced to see you. Nephew Dudley, you perceive I'm engaged.

Charles. I shall not intrude upon your ladyship's more agreeable engagements. I presume I have my answer.

L. Ruf. Your answer, child ! What answer can you possibly expect ; or how can your romantic father suppose that I am to abet him in all his idle and extravagant undertakings ? Come, major, let me shew you the way into my dressing-room ; and let us leave this young adventurer to his meditation.

[Exit.]

O'Fla. I follow, you, my lady. Young gentleman, your obedient ! Upou my conscience, as fine a young fellow as I wou'd wish to clap my eyes on : he might have answer'd my salute, however—well, let it pass ; fortune, perhaps, frowns upon the poor lad ; she's a damn'd slippery lady, and very apt to

jilt us poor fellows, that wear cockades in our hats.
Fare-thee-well, honey, whoever thou art. [*Exit.*]

Charles. So much for the virtues of a puritan;
out upon it, her heart is flint; yet that woman,
that aunt of mine, without one worthy particle in
her composition, wou'd, I dare be sworn, as soon
set her foot in a pest-house as in a play-house.

[*Going.*]

Miss Rusport enters to him.

Char. Stop, stay a little, Charles, whither are
you going in such haste?

Charles. Madam; Miss Rusport; what are your
commands?

Char. Why so reserved? We had used to answer
to no other names than those of Charles and Char-
lotte.

Charles. What ails you? You've been weeping.

Char. No, no; or if I have—your eyes are full
too; but I have a thousand things to say to you:
before you go, tell me, I conjure you, where you
are to be found; here, give me your direction;
write it upon the back of this visiting-ticket—Have
you a pencil?

Charles. I have: but why shou'd you desire to find
us out? 'tis a poor, little, inconvenient place; my
sister has no apartment fit to receive you in.

Servant enters.

Serv. Madam, my lady desires your company di-
rectly.

Char. I am coming—well, have you wrote it?
Give it me. O Charles! either you do not, or you
will not understand me. [*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Room in FULMER's House. Enter FULMER and Mrs. FULMER.

Mrs. Fulmer.

WHY, how you sit, musing and moping, sighing and desponding! I'm ashamed of you, Mr. Fulmer: is this the country you described to me, a second Eldorado, rivers of gold and rocks of diamonds? You found me in a pretty snug retir'd way of life at Bologne, out of the noise and bustle of the world, and wholly at my ease; you, indeed, was upon the wing, with a fiery persecution at your back: but, like a true son of Loyola, you had then a thousand ingenious devices to repair your fortune: and this, your native country, was to be the scene of your performances: fool that I was, to be inveigled into it by you: but, thank Heaven, our partnership is revocable; I am not your wedded wife, praised be my stars! for what have we got, whom have we gull'd but ourselves; which of all your trains has taken fire; even this poor expedient of your book-seller's shop seems abandoned; for if a chance customer drops in, who is there, pray, to help him to what he wants.

Ful. Patty, you know it is not upon flight grounds that I despair; there had us'd to be a livelihood to be pick'd up in this country, both for the honest and dishonest: I have tried each walk, and am likely to starve at 'last; there is not a point to which the wit and faculty of man can turn, that I

have not set mine to; but in vain, I am beat through every quarter of the compass.

Mrs. Ful. Ah! common efforts all: strike me a master-stroke, Mr. Fulmer, if you wish to make any figure in this country.

Ful. But where, how, and what? I have bluster'd for prerogative; I have bellowed for freedom; I have offer'd to serve my country; I have engaged to betray it; a master-stroke, truly; why, I have talked treason, writ treason, and if a man can't live by that he can live by nothing. Here I set up as a bookseller, why men left off reading; and if I was to turn butcher, I believe o' my conscience they'd leave off eating.

[*Captain Dudley crosses the stage.*]

Mrs. Ful. Why there now's your lodger, old Captain Dudley, as he calls himself; there's no flint without fire; something might be struck out of him, if you'd the wit to find the way.

Ful. Hang him, an old dry skin'd curmudgeon; you may as well think to get truth out of a courtier, or candour out of a critic: I can make nothing of him; besides, he's poor, and therefore not for our purpose.

Mrs. Ful. The more fool he! Would any man be poor that had such a prodigy in his possession?

Ful. His daughter, you mean; she is, indeed, uncommonly beautiful.

Mrs. Ful. Beautiful! Why she need only be seen, to have the first men in the kingdom at her feet. Egad, I wish I had the leasing of her beauty; what would some of our young nabobs give——?

Ful. Hush! here comes the captain; good girl, leave us to ourselves, and let me try what I can make of him.

Mrs. Ful. Captain, truly! i'faith, I'd have a regiment, had I such a daughter, before I was three months older. [Exit.

SCENE H.

Captain DUDLEY enters to him.

Ful. Captain Dudley, good morning to you.

Dud. Mr. Fulmer, I have borrowed a book from your shop; 'tis the sixth volume of my deceased friend Tristram; he is a flattering writer to us poor soldiers; and the divine story of Le Fevre, which makes part of this book, in my opinion of it, does honour not to its author only, but to human nature.

Ful. He's an author I keep in the way of trade, but one I never relish'd; he is much too loose and profligate for my taste.

Dud. That's being too severe: I hold him to be a moralist in the noblest sense; he plays indeed with the fancy, and sometimes perhaps too wantonly; but while he thus designedly masks his main attack, he comes at once upon the heart; refines, amends it, softens it; beats down each selfish barrier from about it, and opens every sluice of pity and benevolence.

Ful. We of the catholic persuasion are not much bound to him.—Well, sir, I shall not oppose your

opinion; a favourite author is like a favourite mistress; and there you know, captain, no man likes to have his taste arraigned.

Dud. Upon my word, sir, I don't know what a man likes in that case; 'tis an experiment I never made.

Ful. Sir!—Are you serious!

Dud. 'Tis of little consequence whether you think so.

Ful. What a formal old prig it is! [*Aside.*] I apprehend you, sir; you speak with caution; you are married?

Dud. I have been.

Ful. And this young lady, which accompanies you—

Dud. Passes for my daughter.

Ful. Passes for his daughter! humph—[*Aside.*] She is exceedingly beautiful, finely accomplished, of a most enchanting shape and air.

Dud. You are much too partial; she has the greatest defect a woman can have.

Ful. How so, pray?

Dud. She has no fortune.

Ful. Rather say that you have none; and that's a fore defect in one of your years, Captain Dudley: you've served, no doubt?

Dud. Familiar coxcomb! But I'll humour him.

[*Aside.*

Ful. A close old fox! But I'll unkennel him.

[*Aside.*

Dud. Above thirty years I've been in the service, Mr. Fulmer.

Ful. I guess'd as much; I laid it at no less: why 'tis a wearisome time; 'tis an apprenticeship to a profession, fit only for a patriarch. But preferment must be closely followed: you never could have been so far behind-hand in the chace, unless you had palpably mistaken your way. You'll pardon me, but I begin to perceive you have lived in the world, not with it.

Dud. It may be so; and you, perhaps, can give me better council. I'm now soliciting a favour; an exchange to a company on full pay; nothing more; and yet I meet a thousand bars to that; tho', without boasting, I should think the certificate of services, which I sent in, might have purchased that indulgence to me.

Ful. Who thinks or cares about 'em! Certificate of services, indeed! Send in a certificate of your fair daughter; carry her in your hand with you.

Dud. What! Who? My daughter! Carry my daughter! Well, and what then?

Ful. Why, then your fortune's made, that's all.

Dud. I understand you: and this you call knowledge of the world? Despicable knowledge; but, firrah, I will have you know— [*Threatening him.*]

Ful. Help! Who's within? Wou'd you strike me, fir? Wou'd you lift up your hand against a man in his own house?

Dud. In a church, if he dare insult the poverty of a man of honour.

Ful. Have a care what you do; remember there is such a thing in law as an assault and battery; ay, and such trifling forms as warrants and indictments.

Dud. Go, sir; you are too mean for my resentment: 'tis that, and not the law, protects you.—Hence!

Ful. An old, absurd, incorrigible blockhead! I'll be reveng'd of him. [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Young DUDLEY enters to him.

Charles. What is the matter, sir? Sure I heard an outcry as I enter'd the house?

Dud. Not unlikely; our landlord and his wife are for ever wrangling.—Did you find your aunt Dudley at home?

Charles. I did.

Dud. And what was your reception?

Charles. Cold as our poverty and her pride could make it.

Dud. You told her the pressing occasion I had for a small supply to equip me for this exchange; has she granted me the relief I asked?

Charles. Alas, sir, she has peremptorily refused it.

Dud. That's hard: that's hard, indeed. My petition was for a small sum; she has refused it, you say: well, be it so; I must not complain. Did you see the broker about the insurance on my life?

Charles. There again I am the messenger of ill news; I can raise no money, so fatal is the climate: alas, that ever my father should be sent to perish in such a place!

SCENE IV.

Miss DUDLEY enters hastily.

Dud. Louisa, what's the matter? you seem frightened.

Lou. I am, indeed; coming from Miss Rusport's, I met a young gentleman in the streets, who has beset me in the strangest manner.

Charles. Insufferable! was he rude to you?

Lou. I cannot say he was absolutely rude to me, but he was very importunate to speak to me, and once or twice attempted to lift up my hat: he followed me to the corner of the street, and there I gave him the slip.

Dud. You must walk no more in the streets, child, without me or your brother.

Lou. O, Charles, Miss Rusport desires to see you directly; Lady Rusport is gone out, and she has something particular to say to you.

Charles. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Dud. None, my dear; by all means wait upon Miss Rusport. Come, Louisa, I shall desire you to go up to your chamber, and compose yourself.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V.

Enter BELCOUR, after peeping in at the Door.

Bel. Not a soul, as I'm alive. Why, what an odd sort of a house is this! Confound the little jilt,

she has fairly given me the slip. A plague upon this London, I shall have no luck in it: such a crowd, and such a hurry, and such a number of shops, and one so like the other, that whether the wench turned into this house or the next, or whether she went up stairs or down stairs (for there's a world above and a world below, it seems), I declare I know no more than if I was in the Blue Mountains. In the name of all the devils at once, why did she run away? If every handsome girl I meet in this town is to lead me such a wild-goose chase, I had better have stayed in the torrid zone. I shall be wasted to the size of a sugar-cane. What shall I do? give the chase up? Hang it, that's cowardly. Shall I, a true-born son of Phœbus, suffer this little nimble-footed Daphne to escape me?—"Forbid it, honour, "and forbid it, love."—Hush, hush—here she comes.—Oh, the devil!—What tawdry thing have we got here?—

Mrs. FULMER enters to him.

Mrs. Ful. Your humble servant, sir.

Bel. Your humble servant, madam.

Mrs. Ful. A fine summer's day, sir.

Bel. Yes, ma'am, and so cool, that if the calendar didn't call it July, I should swear it was January.

Mrs. Ful. Sir!

Bel. Madam!

Mrs. Ful. Do you wish to speak to Mr. Fulmer, sir?

Bel. Mr. Fulmer, madam? I hav'n't the honour of knowing such a person.

Mrs. Ful. No, I'll be sworn, have you not; thou art much too pretty a fellow, and too much of a gentleman, to be an author thyself, or to have any thing to say to those that are so. 'Tis the captain, I suppose, you are waiting for.

Bel. I rather suspect it is the captain's wife.

Mrs. Ful. The captain has no wife, sir.

Bel. No wife! I'm heartily sorry for it; for then she's his mistress; and that I take to be the more desperate case of the two; pray, madam, wasn't there a lady just now turn'd into your house? 'Twas with her I wish'd to speak.

Mrs. Ful. What sort of a lady, pray?

Bel. One of the loveliest sort my eyes ever beheld; young, tall, fresh, fair; in short, a goddess.

Mrs. Ful. Nay, but dear, dear sir, now I'm sure you flatter: for 'twas me you followed into the shop door this minute.

Bel. You! No, no, take my word for it, it was not you, madam.

Mrs. Ful. But what is it you laugh at?

Bel. Upon my soul, I ask your pardon; but it was not you, believe me: be assur'd it wasn't.

Mrs. Ful. Well, sir, I shall not contend for the honour of being noticed by you; I hope you think you wou'dn't have been the first man that noticed me in the streets; however, this I'm positive of, that no living woman but myself has enter'd these doors this morning.

Bel. Why then I'm mistaken in the house, that's all; for 'tis not humanly possible I can be so far out in the lady. [Going.]

Mrs. Ful. Coxcomb! But hold—a thought occurs; as sure as can be he has seen Miss Dudley. A word with you, young gentleman; come back.

Bel. Well, what's your pleasure?

Mrs. Ful. You seem greatly captivated with this young lady; are you apt to fall in love thus at first sight?

Bel. Oh, yes: 'tis the only way I can ever fall in love; any man may tumble into a pit by surprise, none but a fool would walk into one by choice.

Mrs. Ful. You are a hasty lover it seems; have you spirit to be a generous one? They that will please the eye mustn't spare the purse.

Bel. Try me; put me to the proof; bring me to an interview with the dear girl that has thus captivated me, and see whether I have spirit to be grateful.

Mrs. Ful. But how, pray, am I to know the girl you have set your heart on?

Bel. By an undescribable grace, that accompanies every look and action that falls from her: there can be but one such woman in the world, and nobody can mistake that one.

Mrs. Ful. Well, if I should stumble upon this angel in my walks, where am I to find you? What's your name?

Bel. Upon my soul, I can't tell you my name.

Mrs. Ful. Not tell me! Why so?

Bel. Because I don't know what it is myself; as yet I have no name.

Mrs. Ful. No name!

Bel. None; a friend, indeed, lent me his; but he forbad me to use it on any unworthy occasion.

Mrs. Ful. But where is your place of abode?

Bel. I have none; I never slept a night in England in my life.

Mrs. Ful. Hey-day!

SCENE VI.

Enter FULMER.

Ful. A fine case, truly, in a free country; a pretty pass things are come to, if a man is to be assaulted in his own house.

Mrs. Ful. Who has assaulted you, my dear?

Ful. Who! why this Captain Drawcanfir, this old Dudley, my lodger: but I'll unlodge him; I'll unharbour him, I warrant.

Mrs. Ful. Hush! hush! hold your tongue, man; pocket the affront, and be quiet; I've a scheme on foot will pay you a hundred beatings. Why you surprise me, Mr. Fulmer; Captain Dudley assault you! Impossible.

Ful. Nay, I can't call it an absolute assault; but he threatened me.

Mrs. Ful. Oh, was that all? I thought how it would turn out—A likely thing, truly, for a person of his obliging compassionate turn; no, no, poor Captain Dudley, he has sorrows and distresses enough of his own to employ his spirits, without setting them against other people. Make it up as fast as you can: watch this gentleman out; follow

him wherever he goes; and bring me word who and what he is; be sure you don't lose sight of him; I've other business in hand. *[Exit.]*

Bel. Pray, sir, what sorrows and distresses have befallen this old gentleman you speak of?

Ful. Poverty, disappointment, and all the distresses attendant thereupon: sorrow enough of all conscience: I soon found how it was with him by his way of living, low enough of all reason; but what I overheard this morning put it out of all doubt.

Bel. What did you overhear this morning?

Ful. Why, it seems he wants to join his regiment, and has been beating the town over to raise a little money for that purpose upon his pay; but the climate, I find, where he is going, is so unhealthy, that no body can be found to lend him any.

Bel. Why then your town is a damn'd good-for-nothing town: and I wish I had never come into it.

Ful. That's what I say, sir; the hard-heartedness of some folks is unaccountable. There's an old Lady Rusport, a near relation of this gentleman's; she lives hard by here, opposite to Stockwell's, the great merchant; he sent to her a begging, but to no purpose; though she is as rich as a Jew, she would not furnish him with a farthing.

Bel. Is the captain at home?

Ful. He is up stairs, sir.

Bel. Will you take the trouble to desire him to step hither? I want to speak to him.

Ful. I'll send him to you directly. I don't know what to make of this young man; but, if I live, I will find him out, or know the reason why. *[Exit.]*

Bel. I've lost the girl, it seems; that's clear: she was the first object of my pursuit; but the case of this poor officer touches me: and, after all, there may be as much true delight in rescuing a fellow-creature from distress, as there would be in plunging one into it.—But let me see.—It's a point that must be managed with some delicacy.—Apropos! there's pen and ink.—I've struck upon a method that will do.—[*Writes.*]—Ay, ay, this is the very thing: 'twas devilish lucky I happened to have these bills about me. There, there, fare you well; I'm glad to be rid of you; you stood a chance of being worse applied, I can tell you.

[*Encloses and seals the paper.*]

SCENE VII.

FULMER brings in DUDLEY.

Ful. That's the gentleman, sir.—I shall make bold, however, to lend an ear. [Exit.]

Dud. Have you any commands for me, sir?

Bel. Your name is Dudley, sir?

Dud. It is.

Bel. You command a company, I think, Captain Dudley?

Dud. I did: I am now upon half-pay.

Bel. You've served some time?

Dud. A pretty many years; long enough to see some people of more merit and better interest than myself made general officers.

Bel. Their merit I may have some doubt of; their interest I can readily give credit to: there is little

promotion to be looked for in your profession, I believe, without friends, captain?

Dud. I believe so too: have you any other business with me, may I ask?

Bel. Your patience for a moment. I was informed you was about to join your regiment in distant quarters abroad?

Dud. I have been soliciting an exchange to a company on full pay, quartered at James's-Forr, in Senegambia; but, I'm afraid, I must drop the undertaking.

Bel. Why so, pray?

Dud. Why so, sir? 'Tis a home-question for a perfect stranger to put; there is something very particular in all this.

Bel. If it is not impertinent, sir, allow me to ask you what reason you have for despairing of success.

Dud. Why really, sir, mine is an obvious reason for a soldier to have——Want of money; simply that.

Bel. May I beg to know the sum you have occasion for?

Dud. Truly, sir, I cannot exactly tell you on a sudden; nor is it, I suppose, of any great consequence to you to be informed; but I should guess, in the gross, that two hundred pounds would serve.

Bel. And do you find a difficulty in raising that sum upon your pay? 'Tis done every day.

Dud. The nature of the climate makes it difficult: I can get no one to insure my life.

Bel. Oh! that's a circumstance may make for you, as well as against: in short, Captain Dudley, it so happens, that I can command the sum of two

two hundred pounds: seek therefore no farther; I'll accommodate you with it upon easy terms.

Dud. Sir! do I understand you rightly?—I beg your pardon; but am I to believe that you are in earnest?

Bel. What is your surprise? Is it an uncommon thing for a gentleman to speak truth? Or is it incredible that one fellow-creature should assist another?

Dud. I ask your pardon——May I beg to know to whom——Do you propose this in the way of business?

Bel. Entirely: I have no other business on earth.

Dud. Indeed!——You are not a broker, I'm persuaded.

Bel. I am not.

Dud. Nor an army agent, I think.

Bel. I hope you will not think the worse of me for being neither; in short, sir, if you will peruse this paper, it will explain to you who I am, and upon what terms I act; while you read it, I will step home, and fetch the money, and we will conclude the bargain without loss of time. In the mean while, good day to you. [Exit hastily.]

Dud. Humph! there's something very odd in all this——let me see what we've got here——This paper is to tell me who he is, and what are his terms: in the name of wonder, why has he sealed it?——Hey-day! what's here? two bank-notes of a hundred each! I can't comprehend what this means. Hold; here's a writing; perhaps that will shew me. 'Accept this trifle; pursue your fortune, and prosper.' Am I in a dream? Is this a reality?

SCENE VIII.

Enter Major O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. Save you, my dear! Is it you now that are Captain Dudley, I would ask?—Whuh! what's the hurry the man's in? If 'tis the lad that ran out of the shop you would overtake, you might as well stay where you are; by my soul he's as nimble as a Croat, you are a full hour's march in his rear—Ay, 'faith, you may as well turn back, and give over the pursuit. Well, Captain Dudley, if that's your name, there's a letter for you. Read, man; read it; and I'll have a word with you after you have done.

Dud. More miracles on foot! So, so, from Lady Rusport.

O'Fla. You're right; it's from her ladyship.

Dud. Well, fir, I have cast my eye over it; 'tis short and peremptory; are you acquainted with the contents?

O'Fla. Not at all, my dear; not at all.

Dud. Have you any message from Lady Rusport?

O'Fla. Not a syllable, honey; only, when you've digested the letter, I've a little bit of a message to deliver you from myself.

Dud. And may I beg to know who yourself is?

O'Fla. Dennis O'Flaherty, at your service; a poor major of grenadiers; nothing better.

Dud. So much for your name and title, fir; now be so good to favour me with your message.

O'Fla. Why then, captain, I must tell you I have promised Lady Rusport you shall do whatever it is she bids you do in that letter there.

Dud. Ay, indeed; have you undertaken so much, major, without knowing either what she commands, or what I can perform?

O'Fla. That's your concern, my dear, not mine; I must keep my word, you know.

Dud. Or else, I suppose, you and I must measure swords.

O'Fla. Upon my soul, you've hit it.

Dud. That would hardly answer to either of us: you and I have, probably, had enough of fighting in our time before now.

O'Fla. Faith and troth, Master Dudley, you may say that: 'tis thirty years, come the time, that I have followed the trade, and in a pretty many countries.—Let me see—In the war before last I served in the Irish brigade, d'ye see; there, after bringing off the French monarch, I left his service, with a British bullet in my body, and this ribband in my button-hole. Last war I followed the fortunes of the German eagle, in the corps of grenadiers; there I had my belly full of fighting, and a plentiful scarcity of every thing else. After six-and-twenty engagements, great and small, I went off, with this gash on my scull, and a kiss of the Empress Queen's sweet hand, (Heaven blefs it!) for my pains. Since the peace, my dear, I took a little turn with the Confederates there in Poland—but such another set of madcaps!—by the lord Harry, I never knew what it was they were scuffling about.

Dud. Well, major, I won't add another action to the list—you shall keep your promise with Lady Rusport; she requires me to leave London; I shall

go in a few days, and you may take what credit you please from my compliance.

O'Fla. Give me your hand, my dear boy! This will make her my own: when that's the case, we shall be brothers, you know, and we'll share her fortune between us.

Dud. Not so, major: the man who marries Lady Rusport will have a fair title to her whole fortune without division. But, I hope, your expectations of prevailing are founded upon good reasons.

O'Fla. Upon the best grounds in the world. First, I think she will comply, because she is a woman: secondly, I am persuaded she won't hold out long, because she's a widow: and thirdly, I make sure of her, because I've married five wives (*en militaire*, captain,) and never failed yet; and, for what I know, they're all alive and merry at this very hour.

Dud. Well, sir, go on and prosper; if you can inspire Lady Rusport with half your charity, I shall think you deserve all her fortune: at present, I must beg your excuse: good morning to you. [*Exit.*]

O'Fla. A good sensible man, and very much of a soldier: I did not care if I was better acquainted with him: but 'tis an awkward kind of country for that; the English, I observe, are close friends, but distant acquaintance. I suspect the old lady has not been over generous to poor Dudley: I shall give her a little touch about that: upon my soul, I know but one excuse a person can have for giving nothing—and that is, like myself, having nothing to give.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IX.

Changes to Lady RUSPORT's House. A Dressing-room.
Miss RUSPORT and LUCY.

Char. Well, Lucy, you've dislodged the old lady at last: but methought you was a tedious time about it.

Lucy. A tedious time indeed; I think they who have least to spare, contrive to throw the most away; I thought I should never have got her out of the house.

Char. Why, she's as deliberate in canvassing every article of her dress, as an ambassador would be in settling the preliminaries of a treaty.

Lucy. There was a new hood and handkerchief, that had come express from Holborn-hill on the occasion, that took as much time in adjusting——

Char. As they did in making, and she was as vain of them as an old maid of a young lover.

Lucy. Or a young lover of himself. Then, madam, this being a visit of great ceremony to a person of distinction, at the West end of the town, the old state chariot was dragged forth on the occasion, with strict charges to dress out the box with the leopard-skin hammer-cloth.

Char. Yes, and to hang the false tails on the miserable stumps of the old crawling cattle. Well, well, pray Heaven the crazy affair don't break down again with her—at least till she gets to her journey's end!——But where's Charles Dudley? Run down, dear girl, and be ready to let him in: I think he's as long in coming as she was in going.

Lucy. Why, indeed, madam, you seem the more alert of the two, I must say. [Exit.

Char. Now the deuce take the girl for putting that notion into my head! I'm sadly afraid Dudley does not like me: so much encouragement as I have given him to declare himself, I never could get a word from him on the subject. This may be very honourable, but upon my life it's very provoking. By the way, I wonder how I look to-day: Oh, shockingly! hideously pale! like a witch! This is the old lady's glass; and she has left some of her wrinkles on it.—How frightfully have I put on my cap! all awry! and my hair dress'd so unbecomingly! altogether, I'm a most complete fright.

SCENE X.

CHARLES DUDLEY comes in unobserved.

Charles. That I deny.

Char. Ah!

Charles. Quarrelling with your glass, cousin? Make it up; make it up, and be friends: it cannot compliment you more than by reflecting you as you are.

Char. Well, I vow, my dear Charles, that is delightfully said, and deserves my very best curtsy: your flattery, like a rich jewel, has a value not only from its superior lustre, but from its extraordinary scarceness; I verily think this is the only civil speech you ever directed to my person in your life.

Charles. And I ought to ask pardon of your good sense for having done it now.

Char. Nay, now you relapse again: don't you know, if you keep well with a woman on the great score of beauty, she'll never quarrel with you on the trifling article of good sense? But any thing serves to fill up a dull yawning hour with an insipid cousin; you have brighter moments, and warmer spirits, for the dear girl of your heart.

Char. Oh, fie upon you, fie upon you!

Char. You blush, and the reason is apparent: you are a novice in hypocrisy; but no practice can make a visit of ceremony pass for a visit of choice: love is ever before its time; friendship is apt to lag a little after it: pray, Charles, did you make any extraordinary haste hither?

Charles. By your question, I see you acquit me of the impertinence of being in love.

Char. But why impertinence? Why the impertinence of being in love? You have one language for me, Charles, and another for the woman of your affection.

Charles. You are mistaken: the woman of my affection shall never hear any other language from me than what I use to you.

Char. I am afraid then you'll never make yourself understood by her.

Charles. It is not fit I should; there is no need of love to make me miserable; 'tis wretchedness enough to be a beggar.

Char. A beggar, do you call yourself? O Charles, Charles, rich in every merit and accomplishment, whom may you not aspire to? And why think you so unworthily of our sex, as to conclude there

is not one to be found with sense to discern your virtue, and generosity to reward it?

Charles. You distress me; I must beg to hear no more.

Char. Well, I can be silent.—Thus does he always serve me, whenever I am about to disclose myself to him.

Charles. Why do you not banish me and my misfortunes from ever from your thoughts?

Char. Ay, wherefore do I not, since you never allowed me a place in yours? But go, sir, I have no right to stay you; go where your heart directs you; go to the happy, the distinguished fair one.

Charles. Now, by all that's good, you do me wrong; there is no such fair one for me to go to; nor have I an acquaintance among the sex, yourself excepted, which answers to that description.

Char. Indeed!

Charles. In very truth: there then let us drop the subject. May you be happy, though I never can.

Char. O Charles! give me your hand: if I have offended you, I ask your pardon: you have been long acquainted with my temper, and know how to bear with its infirmities.

Charles. Thus, my dear Charlotte, let us seal our reconciliation.—[*Kissing her hand.*]—Bear with thy infirmities! By Heaven, I know not any one failing in thy whole composition, except that of too great a partiality for an undeserving man.

Char. And you are now taking the very course to augment that failing. A thought strikes me: I have a commission that you must absolutely execute for me: I have immediate occasion for the sum of

two hundred pounds: you know my fortune is shut up till I am of age; take this paltry box (it contains my ear-rings, and some other baubles I have no use for), carry it to our opposite neighbour, Mr. Stockwell (I don't know where else to apply), leave it as a deposit in his hands, and beg him to accommodate me with the sum.

Charles. Dear Charlotte, what are you about to do? How can you possibly want two hundred pounds?

Char. How can I possibly do without it, you mean? Doesn't every lady want two hundred pounds?—Perhaps I have lost it at play: perhaps I mean to win as much to it; perhaps I want it for two hundred different uses.

Charles. Pooh! pooh! all this is nothing; don't I know you never play?

Char. You mistake; I have a spirit to set not only this trifle, but my whole fortune, upon a stake;—therefore make no wry faces, but do as I bid you: you will find Mr. Stockwell a very honourable gentleman.

Lucy enters in haste.

Lucy. Dear madam, as I live, here comes the old lady in a hackney-coach.

Char. The old chariot has given her a second tumble: away with you; you know your way out without meeting her: take the box, and do as I desire you.

Charles. I must not dispute your orders. Farewell.

[Exeunt Charles and Charlotte.]

SCENE XI.

Enter Lady RUSPORT, leaning on Major O'FLAHERTY's arm.

O'Fla. Rest yourself upon my arm; never spare it; 'tis strong enough: it has stood harder service than you can put it to.

Lucy. Mercy upon me, what is the matter? I am frighten'd out of my wits: has your ladyship had an accident?

L. Rus. O Lucy! the most untoward one in nature: I know not how I shall repair it.

O'Fla. Never go about to repair it, my lady; ev'n build a new one; 'twas but a crazy piece of business at best.

Lucy. Bless me, is the old chariot broke down with you again?

L. Rus. Broke, child? I don't know what might have been broke, if, by great good fortune, this obliging gentleman had not been at hand to assist me.

Lucy. Dear madam, let me run and fetch you a cup of the cordial drops.

L. Rus. Do, Lucy. Alas! sir, ever since I lost my husband, my poor nerves have been shook to pieces: there hangs his beloved picture: that precious relic, and a plentiful jointure, is all that remains to console me for the best of men.

O'Fla. Let me see: i'faith a comely personage; by his fur cloak I suppose he was in the Russian service; and by the gold chain round his neck, I

should guess he had been honoured with the order of St. Catharine.

L. Ruf. No, no: he meddled with no St. Catharines: that's the habit he wore in his mayoralty; Sir Stephen was lord-mayor of London: but he is gone, and has left me a poor, weak, solitary widow behind him.

O'Fla. By all means, then, take a strong, able, hearty man to repair his loss: if such a plain fellow as one Dennis O'Flaherty can please you, I think I may venture to say, without any disparagement to the gentleman in the fur-gown there——

L. Ruf. What are you going to say? Don't shock my ears with any comparison, I desire.

O'Fla. Not I, by my soul; I don't believe there's any comparison in the case.

L. Ruf. Oh, are you come? Give me the drops; I'm all in a flutter.

O'Fla. Hark'e, sweetheart, what are those same drops? have you any more left in the bottle? I didn't care if I took a little sip of them myself.

Lucy. Oh, sir, they are called the cordial restorative elixir, or the nervous golden drops; they are only for ladies' cases.

O'Fla. Yes, yes, my dear, there are gentlemen as well as ladies that stand in need of those same golden drops; they'd suit my case to a tittle.

L. Ruf. Well, major, did you give old Dudley my letter; and will the silly man do as I bid him, and be gone?

O'Fla. You are obeyed; he's on his march.

L. Ruf. That's well; you have managed this matter to perfection; I didn't think he would have been so easily prevailed upon.

O'Fla. At the first word; no difficulty in life; 'twas the very thing he was determined to do, before I came: I never met a more obliging gentleman.

L. Ruf. Well, 'tis no matter: so I am but rid of him, and his distresses: would you believe it, Major O'Flaherty, it was but this morning he sent a begging to me for money to fit him out upon some wild-goose expedition to the coast of Africa, I know not where.

O'Fla. Well, you sent him what he wanted?

L. Ruf. I sent him what he deserved, a flat refusal.

O'Fla. You refused him?

L. Ruf. Most undoubtedly.

O'Fla. You sent him nothing?

L. Ruf. Not a shilling.

O'Fla. Good morning to you—Your servant—

[*Going.*]

L. Ruf. Hey-day! what ails the man? where are you going?

O'Fla. Out of your house, before the roof falls on my head—to poor Dudley, to share the little modicum that thirty years hard service has left me; I wish it was more, for his sake.

L. Ruf. Very well, sir; take your course: I sha'n't attempt to stop you: I shall survive it; it will not break my heart if I never see you more.

O'Fla. Break your heart! No, o' my conscience will it not.—You preach, and you pray, and you turn up your eyes, and all the while you're as hard-hearted as an hyena—An hyena, truly! By my soul,

there isn't in the whole creation so savage an animal as a human creature without pity. [Exit.

L. Ruf. A Hyena, truly! Where did the fellow blunder upon that word? Now the deuce take him for using it, and the Macaronies for inventing it!

ACT III. SCENE I.

A Room in STOCKWELL's House. Enter STOCKWELL, and BELCOUR.

Stockwell.

GRATIFY me so far, however, Mr. Belcour, as to see Miss Rusport; carry her the sum she wants, and return the poor girl her box of diamonds, which Dudley left in my hands; you know what to say on the occasion better than I do: that part of your commission I leave to your own discretion, and you may season it with what gallantry you think fit.

Bel. You could not have pitch'd upon a greater bungler at gallantry than myself, if you had rummag'd every company in the city, and the whole court of aldermen into the bargain: part of your errand, however, I will do; but whether it shall be with an ill grace or a good one, depends upon the caprice of a moment, the humour of the lady, the mode of our meeting, and a thousand undefinable small circumstances that nevertheless determine us upon all the great occasions of life.

Stock. I persuade myself you will find Miss Rusport an ingenuous, worthy, animated girl.

Bel. Why I like her the better, as a woman; but name her not to me as a wife! No, if ever I marry, it must be a staid, sober, confederate damsel, with blood in her veins as cold as a turtle's; quick of scent as a vulture when danger's in the wind; wary and sharp-sighted as a hawk when treachery's on foot: with such a companion at my elbow, for ever whispering in my ear—have a care of this man, he's a cheat; don't go near that woman, she's a jilt; over head there's a scaffold, under foot there's a well: Oh! sir, such a woman might lead me up and down this great city without difficulty or danger; but with a girl of Miss Rusport's complexion, heaven and earth, sir! we should be dup'd, undone, and distracted in a fortnight.

Stock. Ha, ha, ha! Why you are become wondrous circumspect of a sudden, pupil; and if you can find such a prudent damsel as you describe, you have my consent—only beware how you choose; discretion is not the reigning quality amongst the fine ladies of the present time; and I think in Miss Rusport's particular I have given you no bad counsel.

Bel. Well, well, if you'll fetch me the jewels, I believe I can undertake to carry them to her; but as for the money, I'll have nothing to do with that; Dudley would be the fittest ambassador on that occasion; and, if I mistake not, the most agreeable to the lady.

Stock. Why, indeed, from what I know of the matter, it may not improperly be destined to find its way into his pockets. [Exit.

Bel. Then, depend upon it, these are not the only trinkets she means to dedicate to Captain Dudley. As for me, Stockwell indeed wants me to marry; but till I can get this bewitching girl, this incognita, out of my head, I can never think of any other woman.

Enter Servant, and delivers a Letter.

Hey-day! Where can I have picked up a correspondent already? 'Tis a most execrable manuscript—Let me see—Martha Fulmer—Who is Martha Fulmer? Pshaw! I won't be at the trouble of deciphering her damn'd pot-hooks. Hold, hold, hold; what have we got here?

'DEAR SIR,

'I've discover'd the lady you was so much smitten with, and can procure you an interview with her; if you can be as generous to a pretty girl as you was to a paltry old captain,' how did she find that out? 'you need not despair; come to me immediately; the lady is now in my house, and expects you.

'Yours,

'MARTHA FULMER.'

O thou dear, lovely, and enchanting paper, which I was about to tear into a thousand scraps, devoutly I entreat thy pardon: I have slighted thy contents, which are delicious; slander'd thy characters, which are divine; and all the atonement I can make is implicitly to obey thy mandates.

STOCKWELL returns.

Stock. Mr. Belcour, here are the jewels; this letter encloses bills for the money; and, if you will

deliver it to Miss Rusport, you'll have no farther trouble on that score.

Bel. Ah, sir! the letter which I have been reading disqualifies me for delivering the letter which you have been writing: I have other game on foot; the loveliest girl my eyes ever feasted upon is started in view, and the world cannot now divert me from pursuing her.

Stock. Hey-day! What has turned you thus on a sudden?

Bel. A woman: one that can turn, and overturn me and my tottering resolutions every way she will. Oh, sir, if this is folly in me, you must rail at nature: you must chide the sun, that was vertical at my birth, and would not wink upon my nakedness, but swaddled me in the broadest, hottest glare of his meridian beams.

Stock. Mere rhapsody; mere childish rhapsody; the libertine's familiar plea——Nature made us, 'tis true, but we are the responsible creators of our own faults and follies.

Bel. Sir!

Stock. Slave of every face you meet, some huffy has inveigled you, some handsome profligate, (the town is full of them;), and, when once fairly bankrupt in constitution, as well as fortune, nature no longer serves as your excuse for being vicious; necessity, perhaps, will stand your friend, and you'll reform.

Bel. You are severe.

Stock. It fits me to be so—it well becomes a father—I would say a friend——How strangely I forget myself—How difficult it is to counterfeit in-

difference, and put a mask upon the heart—I've struck him hard; he reddens.

Bel. How could you tempt me so? Had you not inadvertently dropped the name of father, I fear our friendship, short as it has been, would scarce have held me——But even your mistake I reverence——Give me your hand——'tis over.

Stock. Generous young man——let me embrace you——How shall I hide my tears? I have been to blame; because I bore you the affection of a father, I rashly took up the authority of one. I ask your pardon——pursue your course; I have no right to stop it——What would you have me do with these things?

Bel. This, if I might advise; carry the money to Miss Rusport immediately; never let generosity wait for its materials; that part of the business presses. Give me the jewels; I'll find an opportunity of delivering them into her hands; and your visit may pave the way for my reception. [*Exit.*]

Stock. Be it so: good morning to you. Farewell advice! Away goes he upon the wing for pleasure. What various passions he awakens in me! He pains, yet pleases me; affrights, offends, yet grows upon my heart. His very failings set him off—for ever trespassing, for ever atoning, I almost think he would not be so perfect, were he free from fault: I must dissemble longer; and yet how painful the experiment!—Even now he's gone upon some wild adventure; and who can tell what mischief may befall him? O nature, what it is to be a father! Just such a thoughtless headlong thing was I when I beguiled his mother into love. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Changes to FULMER's House. Enter FULMER and his Wife.

Ful. I tell you, Patty, you are a fool to think of bringing him and Miss Dudley together; 'twill ruin every thing, and blow your whole scheme up to the moon at once.

Mrs. Ful. Why, sure, Mr. Fulmer, I may be allowed to rear a chicken of my own hatching, as they say. Who first sprung the thought but I, pray? Who first contrived the plot? Who proposed the letter, but I, I?

Ful. And who dogg'd the gentleman home? Who found out his name, fortune, connection; that he was a West Indian, fresh landed, and full of cash; a gull to our heart's content; a hot-brain'd, head-long spark, that would run into our trap, like a wheat-ear under a turf?

Mrs. Ful. Hark! he's come: disappear, march; and leave the field open to my machinations.

[Exit Fulmer.]

SCENE III.

BELCOUR enters to her.

Bel. O, thou dear minister to my happiness, let me embrace thee! Why, thou art my polar star, my propitious constellation, by which I navigate

my impatient bark into the port of pleasure and delight.

Mrs. Ful. Oh, you men are fly creatures! Do you remember now, you cruel, what you said to me this morning?

Bel. All a jest, a frolic; never think on't; bury it for ever in oblivion; thou! why thou art all over nectar and ambrosia, powder of pearl and odour of roses; thou hast the youth of Hebe, the beauty of Venus, and the pen of Sappho; but, in the name of all that's lovely, where's the lady? I expected to find her with you.

Mrs. Ful. No doubt you did, and these raptures were designed for her; but where have you loitered? the lady's gone, you are too late; girls of her sort are not to be kept waiting like negro slaves in your sugar plantations.

Bel. Gone! whither is she gone? tell me that I may follow her.

Mrs. Ful. Hold, hold, not so fast, young gentleman, this is a case of some delicacy; shou'd Captain Dudley know that I introduced you to his daughter, he is a man of such scrupulous honour——

Bel. What do you tell me! is she daughter to the old gentleman I met here this morning?

Mrs. Ful. The same; him you was so generous to.

Bel. There's an end of the matter then at once; it shall never be said of me, that I took the advantage of the father's necessities to trepan the daughter.

[Going.]

Mrs. Ful. So, so, I've made a wrong cast; he's one of your conscientious sinners I find; but I won't lose him thus—Ha, ha, ha!

Bel. What is it you laugh at?

Mrs. Ful. Your absolute inexperience: have you lived so very little time in this country, as not to know that between young people of equal ages the term of sister often is a cover for that of mistress? This young lady is, in that sense of the word, sister to young Dudley, and consequently daughter to my old lodger.

Bel. Indeed! are you serious?

Mrs. Ful. Can you doubt it? I must have been pretty well assur'd of that before I invited you hither.

Bel. That's true; she cannot be a woman of honour, and Dudley is an unconscionable young rogue to think of keeping one fine girl in pay, by raising contributions on another; he shall therefore give her up; she is a dear, bewitching, mischievous, little devil; and he shall positively give her up.

Mrs. Ful. Ay, now the freak has taken you again; I say, give her up; there's one way, indeed, and certain of success.

Bel. What's that?

Mrs. Ful. Out-bid him, never dream of out-blustering him; buy out his lease of possession, and leave her to manage his ejectment.

Bel. Is she so venal? Never fear me then; when beauty is the purchase, I sha'n't think much of the price.

Mrs. Ful. All things, then, will be made easy enough; let me see; some little genteel present to

begin with: what have you got about you? Ay, search; I can bestow it to advantage; there's no time to be lost.

Bel. Hang it, confound it; a plague upon't, say I. I hav'n't a guinea left in my pocket; I parted from my whole stock here this morning, and have forgot to supply myself since.

Mrs. Ful. Mighty well; let it pass then; there's an end; think no more of the lady, that's all.

Bel. Distraction! think no more of her? Let me only step home and provide myself, I'll be back with you in an instant.

Mrs. Ful. Pooh, pooh! that's a wretched shift: have you nothing of value about you? Money's a coarse slovenly vehicle, fit only to bribe electors in a borough; there are more graceful ways of purchasing a lady's favours; rings, tinkets, jewels!

Bel. Jewels! Gadso, I protest I had forgot: I have a case of jewels; but they won't do, I must not part from them; no, no, they are appropriated; they are none of my own.

Mrs. Ful. Let me see, let me see! Ay, now, this were something-like:—pretty creatures, how they sparkle! these would ensure success.

Bel. Indeed!

Mrs. Ful. These would make her your own forever.

Bel. Then the deuce take 'em for belonging to another person! I could find in my heart to give 'em the girl, and swear I've lost them.

Mrs. Ful. Ay, do; say they were stolen out of your pocket.

Bel. No, hang it, that's dishonourable: here, give me the paltry things, I'll give you an order on my merchant for double their value.

Mrs. Ful. An order! No; order for me no orders upon merchants, with their value received, and three days grace; their noting, protesting, and endorsing, and all their counting-house formalities; I'll have nothing to do with them: leave your diamonds with me, and give your order for the value of them to the owner: the money would be as good as the trinkets, I warrant you.

Bel. Hey! how! I never thought of that: but a breach of trust; 'tis impossible; I never can consent; therefore, give me the jewels back again.

Mrs. Ful. Take 'em: I am now to tell you the lady is in this house.

Bel. In this house?

Mrs. Ful. Yes, sir, in this very house; but what of that? You have got what you like better; your toys, your trinkets. Go, go: oh! you're a man of a notable spirit, are you not?

Bel. Provoking creature! bring me to the sight of the dear creature, and dispose of me as you think fit.

Mrs. Ful. And of the diamonds too?

Bel. Damn 'em, I would there was not such a bauble in nature! But come, come, dispatch: if I had the throne of Dehli, I should give it to her.

Mrs. Ful. Swear to me then that you will keep within bounds; remember, she passes for the sister of young Dudley. Oh! if you come to your flights and your rhapsodies, she'll be off in an instant.

Bel. Never fear me.

Mrs. Ful. You must expect to hear her talk of her father, as she calls him, and her brother, and your bounty to her family.

Bel. Ay, ay, never mind what she talks of, only bring her.

Mrs. Ful. You'll be prepared upon that head?

Bel. I shall be prepared, never fear: away with you.

Mrs. Ful. But hold, I had forgot: not a word of the diamonds; leave that matter to my management.

Bel. Hell and vexation! Get out of the room, or I shall run distracted. [*Exit Mrs. Fulmer.*] Of a certain, Belcour, thou art born to be the fool of woman: sure no man sins with so much repentance, or repents with so little amendment, as I do. I cannot give away another person's property; honour forbids me: and I positively cannot give up the girl; love, passion, constitution, every thing protests against that. How shall I decide? I cannot bring myself to break a trust, and I am not at present in the humour to baulk my inclination. Is there no middle way? Let me consider—There is, there is: my good genius has presented me with one; apt, obvious, honourable: the girl shall not go without her baubles—I'll not go without the girl—Miss Rusport sha'n't lose her diamonds—I'll save Dudley from destruction—and every party shall be a gainer by the project.

SCENE IV.

Enter Mrs. FULMER, introducing Miss DUDLEY.

Mrs. Ful. Miss Dudley, this is the worthy gentleman you wish to see; this is Mr. Belcour.

Louisa. As I live, the very man, that beset me in the streets! *[Aside.*

Bel. An angel, by this light! Oh, I am gone past all retrieving! *[Aside.*

Lou. Mrs. Fulmer, sir, informs me you are the gentleman from whom my father has received such civilities.

Bel. Oh! never name 'em.

Lou. Pardon me, Mr. Belcour, they must be both named and remembered; and if my father was here—

Bel. I am much better pleased with his representative.

Lou. That title is my brother's, sir; I have no claim to it.

Bel. I believe it.

Lou. But as neither he nor my father were fortunate enough to be at home, I could not resist the opportunity—

Bel. Nor I neither, by my soul, madam: let us improve it, therefore. I am in love with you to distraction; I was charmed at the first glance; I attempted to accost you; you fled, I followed; but was defeated of an interview: at length I have obtained one, and seize the opportunity of casting my person and my fortune at your feet.

Lou. You astonish me. Are you in your senses, or do you make a jest of my misfortunes? Do you

ground pretences on your generosity, or do you make a practice of this folly with every woman you meet?

Bel. Upon my life, no: as you are the handsomest woman I ever met, so you are the first to whom I ever made the like professions: as for my generosity, madam, I must refer you on that score to this good lady, who I believe has something to offer in my behalf.

Lou. Don't build upon that, sir; I must have better proofs of your generosity, than the mere disvestment of a little superfluous dross, before I can credit the sincerity of a profession so abruptly delivered. [Exit hastily.]

Bel. O ye gods and goddesses, how her anger animates her beauty! [Going out.]

Mrs. Ful. Stay, sir; if you stir a step after her, I renounce your interest for ever: why you'll ruin every thing.

Bel. Well, I must have her, cost what it will: I see she understands her own value, though; a little superfluous dross, truly: She must have better proofs of my generosity.

Mrs. Ful. 'Tis exactly as I told you; your money she calls dross; she's too proud to stain her fingers with your coin: bait your hook well with jewels; try that experiment, and she's your own.

Bel. Take 'em; let 'em go; lay 'em at her feet; I must get out of the scrape as I can; my propensity is irresistible: there; you have 'em; they are your's; they are hers; but remember they are a trust: I commit them to her keeping till I can buy 'em off

with something she shall think more valuable; now tell me when shall I meet her?

Mrs. Ful. How can I tell that? Don't you see what an alarm you've put her into? Oh, you're a rare one! But go your ways for this while; leave her to my management, and come to me at seven this evening; but remember not to bring empty pockets with you—Ha, ha, ha! [*Exeunt scowally.*]

SCENE V.

Lady RUSPORT's House. Enter Miss RUSPORT, followed by a Servant.

Char. Desire Mr. Stockwell to walk in.

[*Exit Serv.*]

Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. Madam, your most obedient servant: I am honoured with your commands, by Captain Dudley, and have brought the money with me as you directed; I understand the sum you have occasion for is two hundred pounds.

Char. It is, sir; I am quite confounded at your taking this trouble upon yourself, Mr. Stockwell.

Stock. There is a bank-note, madam, to the amount: your jewels are in safe hands, and will be delivered to you directly. If I had been happy in being better known to you, I should have hoped you would not have thought it necessary to place a deposit in my hands for so trifling a sum as you have now required me to supply you with.

Char. The baubles I sent you may very well be spared; and, as they are the only security in my present situation I can give you, I could wish you would retain them in your hands: when I am of age (which, if I live a few months, I shall be), I will replace your favour with thanks.

Stock. It is obvious, Miss Rusport, that your charms will suffer no impeachment by the absence of those superficial ornaments; but they should be seen in the suite of a woman of fashion, not as creditors, to whom you are indebted for your appearance, but as subservient attendants, which help to make up your equipage.

Char. Mr. Stockwell is determined not to wrong the confidence I reposed in his politeness.

Stock. I have only to request, madam, that you will allow Mr. Belcour, a young gentleman in whose happiness I particularly interest myself, to have the honour of delivering you the box of jewels.

Char. Most gladly; any friend of yours cannot fail of being welcome here.

Stock. I flatter myself you will not find him totally undeserving your good opinion; an education, not of the strictest kind, and strong animal spirits, are apt sometimes to betray him into youthful irregularities; but an high principle of honour, and an uncommon benevolence, in the eye of candour will, I hope, atone for any faults, by which these good qualities are not impaired.

Char. I dare say Mr. Belcour's behaviour wants no apology; we've no right to be over strict in canvassing the morals of a common acquaintance.

Stock. I wish it may be my happiness to see Mr. Belcour in the list, not of your common, but particular acquaintance—of your friends, Miss Rusport—I dare not be more explicit.

Char. Nor need you, Mr. Stockwell: I shall be studious to deserve his friendship; and, though I have long since unalterably placed my affection on another, I trust, I have not left myself insensible to the merits of Mr. Belcour; and hope that neither he nor you will, for that reason, think me less worthy of your good opinion and regards.

Stock. Miss Rusport, I sincerely wish you happy: I have no doubt you have placed your affection on a deserving man; and I have no right to combat your choice. *[Exit.*

Char. How honourable is that behaviour! Now, if Charles were here, I should be happy. The old lady is so fond of her new Irish acquaintance, that I have the whole house at my disposal. *[Exit.*

SCENE VI.

Enter BELCOUR, preceded by a Servant.

Serv. I ask your honour's pardon; I thought my young lady was here: who shall I inform her would speak to her?

Bel. Belcour is my name, sir; and pray beg your lady to put herself in no hurry on my account: for I'd sooner see the devil than see her face.—*[Exit Servant.]*—In the name of all that's mischievous, why did Stockwell drive me hither in such haste? A pretty figure, truly, I shall make! an ambassa-

dor without credentials. Blockhead that I was, to charge myself with her diamonds—officious, meddling puppy! Now, they are irretrievably gone: that suspicious jade Fulmer wou'dn't part even with a sight of them, tho' I would have ransomed them at twice their value. Now must I trust to my poor wits to bring me off: a lamentable dependance. Fortune be my helper:—Here comes the girl.—If she is noble-minded, as she is said to be, she will forgive me—if not, 'tis a lost cause; for I have not thought of one word in my excuse.

SCENE VII.

Enter CHARLOTTE.

Char. Mr. Belcour, I'm proud to see you: your friend, Mr. Stockwell, prepared me to expect this honour; and I am happy in the opportunity of being known to you.

Bel. A fine girl, by my soul! Now what a cursed hang-dog do I look like! [*Aside.*]

Char. You are newly arrived in this country, sir?

Bel. Just landed, madam, just set a-shore, with a large cargo of Muscavado sugars, rum-puncheons, mahogany slabs, wet sweetmeats, and green parquets.

Char. May I ask you how you like London, sir.

Bel. To admiration: I think the town and the towns-folk are exactly suited: 'tis a great, rich, overgrown, noisy, tumultuous place: the whole morning is a bustle to get money, and the whole afternoon is a hurry to spend it.

Char. Are these all the observations you have made?

Bel. No, madam; I have observed the women are very captivating, and the men very soon caught.

Char. Ay, indeed! Whence do you draw that conclusion?

Bel. From infallible guides; the first remark I collect from what I now see, the second from what I now feel.

Char. Oh, the deuce take you! But, to wave this subject—I believe, fir, this was a visit of business, not compliment: was it not?

Bel. Ay—now comes on my execution.

Char. You have some foolish trinkets of mine, Mr. Belcour; hav'n't you?

Bel. No, in truth, they are gone in search of a trinket, still more foolish than themselves. [*Aside.*

Char. Some diamonds, I mean, fir. Mr. Stockwell informed me you was charged with 'em.

Bel. Oh, yes, madam—but I have the most treacherous memory in life—here they are: pray put 'em up; they're all right; you need not examine 'em.

[*Gives a box.*

Char. Hey-day—right, fir! Why these are not my diamonds; these are quite different; and, as it should seem, of much greater value.

Bel. Upon my life, I'm glad on't; for then I hope you value them more than your own.

Char. As a purchaser I should, but not as an owner: you mistake; these belong to somebody else.

Bel. 'Tis your's, I'm afraid, that belong to somebody else.

Char. What is it you mean? I must insist upon your taking 'em back again.

Bel. Pray, madam, don't do that; I shall infallibly lose them: I have the worst luck with diamonds of any man living.

Char. That you might well say, was you to give me these in the place of mine; but pray, sir, what is the reason of all this? Why have you changed the jewels, and where have you disposed of mine?

Bel. Miss Rusport, I cannot invent a lie for my life; and, if it was to save it, I cou'dn't tell one: I am an idle, dissipated, unthinking fellow, not worth your notice; in short, I am a West Indian; and you must try me according to the charter of my colony, not by a jury of English spinsters. The truth is, I've given away your jewels; caught with a pair of sparkling eyes, whose lustre blinded theirs, I served your property as I should my own, and lavished it away: let me not totally despair of your forgiveness: I frequently do wrong, but never with impunity; if your displeasure is added to my own, my punishment will be too severe. When I parted from the jewels, I had not the honour of knowing their owner.

Char. Mr. Belcour, your sincerity charms me; I enter at once into your character, and I make all the allowances for it you can desire. I take your jewels for the present, because I know there is no other way of reconciling you to yourself; but, if I give way to your spirit in one point, you must yield to mine in another; remember, I will not keep more than the value of my own jewels: there is no

need to be pillaged by more than one woman at a time, fir.

Bel. Now, may every blessing that can crown your virtues, and reward your beauty, be showered upon you! May you meet admiration without envy, love without jealousy, and old age without malady! May the man of your heart be ever constant, and you never meet a less penitent or less grateful offender than myself!

Enter Servant, who delivers a Letter.

Char. Does your letter require such haste?

Serv. I was bade to give it into your own hands, madam.

Char. From Charles Dudley, I see—Have I your permission? Good Heaven, what do I read!—Mr. Belcour, you are concerned in this—‘Dear Charlotte, in the midst of our distress, Providence has cast a benefactor in our way, after the most unexpected manner: a young West Indian, rich, and with a warmth of heart peculiar to his climate, has rescued my father from his troubles, satisfied his wants, and enabled him to accomplish his exchange: when I relate to you the manner in which this was done, you will be charmed; I can only now add, that it was by chance we found out that his name is Belcour, and that he is a friend of Mr. Stockwell’s. I lose not a moment’s time, in making you acquainted with this fortunate event, for reasons which delicacy obliges me to suppress: but, perhaps, if you have not received the money on your

jewels, you will not think it necessary now to do it.
I have the honour to be,

Dear madam,

Most faithfully yours,

CHARLES DUDLEY.

Is this your doing, sir? Never was generosity so worthily exerted.

Bel. Or so greatly overpaid.

Char. After what you have now done for this noble, but indigent family, let me not scruple to unfold the whole situation of my heart to you. Know then, sir (and don't think the worse of me for the frankness of my declaration), that such is my attachment to the son of that worthy officer, whom you relieved, that the moment I am of age, and in possession of my fortune, I should hold myself the happiest of women to share it with young Dudley.

Bel. Say you so, madam? then let me perish if I don't love and reverence you above all woman-kind; and, if such is your generous resolution, never wait till you're of age; life is too short, pleasure too fugitive; the soul grows narrower every hour; I'll equip you for your escape; I'll convey you to the man of your heart, and away with you then to the first hospitable parson that will take you in.

Char. O blessed be the torrid zone for ever, whose rapid vegetation quickens nature into such benignity! These latitudes are made for politics and philosophy; friendship has no root in this soil. But, had I spirit to accept your offer, which is not improbable, wouldn't it be a mortifying thing for a

fond girl to find herself mistaken, and sent back to her home like a vagrant?—and such, for what I know, might be my case.

Bel. Then he ought to be proscribed the society of mankind for ever——Ay, ay, 'tis the sham sister that makes him thus indifferent; 'twill be a meritorious office to take that girl out of the way.

SCENE VIII.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Miss Dudley to wait on you, madam.

Bel. Who?

Serv. Miss Dudley.

Char. What's the matter, Mr. Belcour? Are you frightened at the name of a pretty girl? 'Tis the sister of him we were speaking of—Pray admit her.

Bel. The sister; So, so! he has imposed on her too—This is an extraordinary visit, truly. Upon my soul, the assurance of some folks is not to be accounted for.

Char. I insist upon your not running away; you'll be charmed with Louisa Dudley.

Bel. Oh, yes, I am charmed with her.

Char. You've seen her then, have you?

Bel. Yes, yes, I've seen her.

Char. Well, isn't she a delightful girl?

Bel. Very delightful.

Char. Why, you answer as if you was in a court of justice. O' my conscience, I believe you are caught: I've a notion she has tricked you out of your heart.

Bel. I believe she has, and you out of your jewels; for, to tell you the truth, she's the very person I gave 'em to.

Char. You gave her my jewels! Louisa Dudley my jewels? Admirable! inimitable! Oh, the sly little jade! But hush, here she comes; I don't know how I shall keep my countenance.

Enter LOUISA.

My dear, I'm rejoiced to see you: how d'ye do? I beg leave to introduce Mr. Belcour, a very worthy friend of mine: I believe, Louisa, you have seen him before.

Lou. I have met the gentleman.

Char. You have met the gentleman: well, fir, and you have met the lady: in short, you have met each other; why then don't you speak to each other? How you both stand! tongue-tied, and fixed as statues—Ha, ha, ha! Why you'll fall asleep by-and-by.

Lou. Fye upon you, fye upon you! is this fair?

Bel. Upon my soul, I never looked so like a fool in my life: the assurance of that girl puts me quite down.

[*Aside.*

Char. Sir—Mr. Belcour—Was it your pleasure to advance any thing? Not a syllable. Come, Louisa, women's wit, they say, is never at a loss—Nor you neither? Speechless both—Why, you was merry enough before this lady came in.

Lou. I am sorry I have been any interruption to your happiness, fir.

Bel. Madam!

Char. Madam! Is that all you can say? But come, my dear girl, I won't tease you. Apropos, I must shew you what a present this dumb gentleman has made me: are not these handsome diamonds?

Lou. Yes, indeed, they seem very fine; but I am no judge of these things.

Char. Oh, you wicked little hypocrite, you are no judge of these things, Louisa; you have no diamonds, not you.

Lou. You know I hav'n't, Miss Rusport: you know those things are infinitely above my reach.

Char. Ha, ha, ha!

Bel. She does tell a lie with an admirable countenance, that's true enough.

Lou. What ails you, Charlotte? What impertinence have I been guilty of, that you should find it necessary to humble me at such a rate? If you are happy, long may you be so; but, surely, it can be no addition to it to make me miserable.

Char. So serious! There must be some mystery in this—Mr. Belcour, will you leave us together? You see I treat you with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance already.

Bel. Oh, by all means, pray command me. Miss Rusport, I'm your most obedient. By your condescension in accepting these poor trifles, I am under eternal obligations to you—To you, Miss Dudley, I shall not offer a word on that subject: you despise finery; you have a soul above it; I adore your spirit; I was rather unprepared for meeting you here; but I shall hope for an opportunity of making myself better known to you. [Exit.

SCENE IX.

CHARLOTTE and LOUISA.

Char. Louisa Dudley, you surprize me ; I never saw you act thus before : can't you bear a little innocent raillery before the man of your heart ?

Lou. The man of my heart, madam ? Be assured I never was so visionary to aspire to any man whom Miss Rusport honours with her choice.

Char. My choice, my dear ? Why we are playing at cross-purposes : how enter'd it into your head that Mr. Belcour was the man of my choice ?

Lou. Why, didn't he present you with those diamonds ?

Char. Well, perhaps he did—and pray, Louisa, have you no diamonds ?

Lou. I diamonds, truly ?—Who should give me diamonds ?

Char. Who, but this very gentleman ?—apropos, here comes your brother.

SCENE X.

Enter CHARLES.

I insist upon referring our dispute to him ; your sister and I, Charles, have a quarrel ; Belcour, the hero of your letter, has just left us—some how or other, Louisa's bright eyes have caught him ; and the poor fellow's fallen desperately in love with her—(don't interrupt me, huffy)—Well, that's excusable enough, you'll say ; but the jest of the story

is, that this hair-brain'd spark, who does nothing like other people, has given her the very identical jewels which you pledged for me to Mr. Stockwell; and will you believe that this little demure flut made up a face, and squeezed out three or four hypocritical tears, because I rallied her about it.

Charles. I'm all astonishment! Louisa, tell me, without reserve, has Mr. Belcour given you any diamonds?

Lou. None, upon my honour.

Charles. Has he made any professions to you?

Lou. He has; but altogether in a stile so whimsical and capricious, that the best which can be said of them is to tell you, that they seem'd more the result of good spirits than good manners.

Char. Ay, ay, now the murder's out; he's in love with her, and she has no very great dislike to him; trust to my observation, Charles, for that: as to the diamonds, there's some mistake about them, and you must clear it up: three minutes conversation with him will put every thing in a right train; go, go, Charles, 'tis a brother's business; about it instantly; ten to one you'll find him over the way at Mr. Stockwell's.

Charles. I confess I'm impatient to have the case clear'd up; I'll take your advice, and find him out: good bye to you.

Char. Your servant; my life upon it you'll find Belcour a man of honour. Come, Louisa, let us adjourn to my dressing-room; I've a little private business to transact with you, before the old lady comes up to tea and interrupts us. [Exeunt.]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

FULMER'S House. Enter FULMER and Mrs. FULMER.

Fulmer.

PATTY, wasn't Mr. Belcour with you?

Mrs. Ful. He was; and is now shut up in my chamber, in high expectation of an interview with Miss Dudley: she's at present with her brother, and 'twas with some difficulty I persuaded my hot-headed spark to wait till he has left her.

Ful. Well, child, and what then?

Mrs. Ful. Why then, Mr. Fulmer, I think it will be time for you and me to steal a march, and be gone.

Ful. So, this is all the fruit of your ingenious project; a shameful overthrow, or a sudden flight.

Mrs. Ful. Why, my project was a mere impromptu, and can at worst but quicken our departure a few days; you know we had fairly outliv'd our credit here, and a trip to Bologne is no ways unseasonable. Nay, never droop, man.—Hark! Hark! here's enough to bear charges. [*Shewing a purse.*]

Ful. Let me see, let me see: this weighs well; this is of the right sort: why your West Indian bled freely.

Mrs. Ful. But that's not all: look here! Here are the sparklers! [*Shewing the jewels.*] Now what d'ye think of my performances? Heh! a foolish scheme, isn't it—a silly woman—?

Ful. Thou art a Judith, a Joan of Arc, and I'll march under thy banners, girl, to the world's end.

Come, let's begone; I've little to regret; my creditors may share the old books amongst them; they'll have occasion for philosophy to support their loss; they'll find enough upon my shelves: the world is my library; I read mankind—Now, Patty, lead the way.

Mrs. Ful. Adieu, Belcour!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY and LOUISA.

Charles. Well, Louisa, I confess the force of what you say: I accept Miss Rusport's bounty; and, when you see my generous Charlotte, tell her—but have a care, there is a selfishness even in gratitude, when it is too profuse; to be over-thankful for any one favour, is in effect to lay out for another; the best return I could make my benefactress wou'd be never to see her more.

Lou. I understand you.

Charles. We that are poor, Louisa, shou'd be cautious: for this reason, I would guard you against Belcour; at least till I can unravel the mystery of Miss Rusport's diamonds. I was disappointed of finding him at Mr. Stockwell's, and am now going in search of him again: he may intend honourably; but, I confess to you, I am stagger'd; think no more of him, therefore, for the present: of this be sure, while I have life, and you have honour, I will protect you, or perish in your defence. [*Exit.*]

Lou. Think of him no more! Well, I'll obey; but if a wand'ring uninvited thought should creep

by chance into my bosom, must I not give the harmless wretch a shelter? Oh! yes; the great artificer of the human heart knows every thread he wove into its fabric, nor puts his work to harder uses than it was made to bear: my wishes then, my guiltless ones, I mean, are free: how fast they spring within me at that sentence! Down, down, ye busy creatures! Whither wou'd you carry me? Ah! there is one amongst you, a forward, new intruder, that, in the likeness of an offending, generous man, grows into favour with my heart. Fye, fye upon it! Belcour pursues, insults me; yet, such is the fatality of my condition, that what shou'd rouse resentment, only calls up love.

SCENE III.

BELCOUR enters to her.

Bel. Alone, by all that's happy!

Lou. Ah!

Bel. Oh! shriek not, start not, stir not, leveliest creature! but let me kneel, and gaze upon your beauties.

Lou. Sir! Mr. Belcour, rise! What is it you do?

Bel. See, I obey you; mould me as you will, behold your ready servant! New to your country, ignorant of your manners, habits, and desires, I put myself into your hands for instruction; make me only such as you can like yourself, and I shall be happy.

Lou. I must not hear this, Mr. Belcour: go; should he that parted from me but this minute now return, I tremble for the consequence.

Bel. Fear nothing; let him come: I love you, madam; he'll find it hard to make me unsay that.

Lou. You terrify me; your impetuous temper frightens me; you know my situation; it is not generous to pursue me thus.

Bel. True; I do know your situation; your real one, Miss Dudley, and am resolv'd to snatch you from it; 'twill be a meritorious act; the old captain shall rejoice; Miss Rusport shall be made happy; and even he, even your beloved brother, with whose resentment you threaten me, shall in the end applaud and thank me. Come, thou'rt a dear enchanting girl, and I'm determin'd not to live a minute longer without thee.

Lou. Hold, are you mad? I see you are a bold, assuming man, and know not where to stop.

Bel. Who that beholds such beauty can? By Heaven, you put my blood into a flame. Provoking girl! is it within the stretch of my fortune to content you? What is it you can further ask that I am not ready to grant?

Lou. Yes, with the same facility that you bestow'd upon me Miss Rusport's diamonds. For shame! for shame! was that a manly story?

Bel. So! so! these devilish diamonds meet me every where—Let me perish if I meant you any harm. Oh! I cou'd tear my tongue out for saying a word about the matter.

Lou. Go to her then, and contradict it; till that is done, my reputation is at stake.

Bel. Her reputation! Now she has got upon that, she'll go on for ever.—What is there I will not do, for your sake? I will go to Miss Rusport.

Lou. Do so; restore her own jewels to her, which I suppose you kept back for the purpose of presenting others to her of a greater value; but for the future, Mr. Belcour, when you wou'd do a gallant action to that lady, don't let it be at my expence.

Bel. I see where she points: she is willing enough to give up Miss Rusport's diamonds, now she finds she shall be a gainer by the exchange. Be it so! 'tis what I wish'd.—Well, madam, I will return Miss Rusport her own jewels, and you shall have others of tenfold their value.

Lou. No, sir, you err most widely; it is my good opinion, not my vanity, which you must bribe.

Bel. Why, what the devil wou'd she have now? —Miss Dudley, it is my wish to obey and please you, but I have some apprehension that we mistake each other.

Lou. I think we do; tell me, then, in few words, what it is you aim at.

Bel. In few words, then, and in plain honesty, I must tell you, so entirely am I captivated with you, that had you but been such as it would have become me to have call'd my wife, I had been happy in knowing you by that name; as it is, you are welcome to partake my fortune, give me in return your person, give me pleasure, give me love; free, disencumber'd, anti-matrimonial love.

Lou. Stand off, and let me never see you more.

Bel. Hold, hold, thou dear, tormenting, tantalizing girl! Upon my knees I swear you shall not stir till you've consented to my bliss.

Lou. Unhand me, sir; O Charles! protect me, rescue me, redress me.

[Exit.

SCENE IV.

Enter CHARLES DUDLEY.

Charles. How's this! Rise, villain, and defend yourself.

Bel. Villain!

Charles. The man who wrongs that lady is a villain—Draw!

Bel. Never fear me, young gentleman; brand me for a coward if I baulk you.

Charles. Yet hold! Let me not be too hasty: your name, I think, is Belcour.

Bel. Well, sir.

Charles. How is it, Mr. Belcour, you have done this mean, unmanly wrong; beneath the mask of generosity to give this fatal stab to our domestic peace? You might have had my thanks, my blessing; take my defiance now. 'Tis Dudley speaks to you, the brother, the protector of that injur'd lady.

Bel. The brother? Give yourself a truer title.

Charles. What is't you mean?

Bel. Come, come, I know both her and you: I found you, sir, (but how or why I know not) in the good graces of Miss Rusport—(yes, colour at the name!) I gave you no disturbance there, never broke in upon you in that rich and plenteous quarter; but, when I cou'd have blasted all your projects with a word, spar'd you, in foolish pity spar'd you, nor rous'd her from the fond credulity in which your artifice had lull'd her.

Charles. No, sir, nor boasted to her of the splendid present you had made my poor Louisa; the diamonds, Mr. Belcour. How was that? What can you plead to that arraignment?

Bel. You question me too late; the name of Belcour and of villain never met before; had you enquir'd of me before you utter'd that rash word, you might have sav'd yourself or me a mortal error: now, sir, I neither give nor take an explanation; so, come on! [*They fight.*]

SCENE V.

Enter LOUISA, and afterwards O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. Hold, hold, for Heaven's sake hold! Charles! Mr. Belcour! Help! Sir, sir, make haste, they'll murder one another.

O'Fla. Hell and confusion! What's all this uproar for? Can't you leave off cutting one another's throats, and mind what the poor girl says to you? You've done a notable thing, hav'n't you both, to put her into such a flurry? I think, o' my conscience, she's the most frightened of the three.

Charles. Dear Louisa, recollect yourself; why did you interfere? 'Tis in your cause.

Bel. Now cou'd I kill him for careffing her.

O'Fla. O, sir, your most obedient! You are the gentleman I had the honour of meeting here before; you was then running off at full speed like a Calmuck; now you are tiling and driving like a Bedlamite with this lad here, that seems as mad as your-

self: 'tis pity but your country had a little more employment for you both.

Bel. Mr. Dudley, when you've recovered the lady, you know where I am to be found. *[Exit.*

O'Fla. Well then, can't you stay where you are, and that will save the trouble of looking after you? Yon volatile fellow thinks to give a man the meeting by getting out of his way: by my soul, 'tis a round-about method that of his. But I think he call'd you Dudley. Hark'e, young man, are you son of my friend the old captain?

Charles. I am. Help me to convey this lady to her chamber, and I shall be more at leisure to answer your questions.

O'Fla. Ay, will I: come along, pretty one; if you've had wrong done you, young man, you need look no further for a second; Dennis O'Flaherty's a your man for that: but never draw your sword before a woman, Dudley; damn it, never while you live draw your sword before a woman. *[Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

Lady Rusport's House. Enter Lady Rusport and Servant.

Serv. An elderly gentleman, who says his name is Varland, desires leave to wait on your ladyship.

L. Ruf. Shew him in; the very man I wished to see: Varland, he was Sir Oliver's solicitor, and privy to all his affairs; he brings some good tidings; some fresh mortgage, or another bond come to light; they start up every day.

Enter VARLAND.

Mr. Varland, I'm glad to see you; you're heartily welcome, honest Mr. Varland; you and I hav'n't met since our late irreparable loss: how have you passed your time this age?

Var. Truly, my lady, ill enough: I thought I must have followed good Sir Oliver.

L. Ruf. Alack-a-day, poor man! Well, Mr. Varland, you find me here overwhelmed with trouble and fatigue; torn to pieces with a multiplicity of affairs; a great fortune poured upon me unsought for and unexpected: 'twas my good father's will and pleasure it should be so, and I must submit.

Var. Your ladyship inherits under a will made in the year forty-five, immediately after Captain Dudley's marriage with your sister.

L. Ruf. I do so, Mr. Varland; I do so.

Var. I well remember it; I engrossed every syllable; but I am surprised to find your ladyship set so little store by this vast accession.

L. Ruf. Why you know, Mr. Varland, I am a moderate woman; I had enough before; a small matter satisfies me; and Sir Stephen Rusport (Heaven be his portion!) took care I shou'dn't want that.

Var. Very true; very true, he did so; and I am overjoyed at finding your ladyship in this disposition; for, truth to say, I was not without apprehension the news I have to communicate would have been of some prejudice to your ladyship's tranquillity.

L. Ruf. News, sir! What news have you for me?

Var. Nay, nothing to alarm you; a trifle, in your present way of thinking: I have a will of Sir Oliver's you have never seen.

L. Ruf. A will! Impossible! How came you by it, pray?

Var. I drew it up, at his command, in his last illness: it will save you a world of trouble: it gives his whole estate from you to his grandson, Charles Dudley.

L. Ruf. To Dudley? His estate to Charles Dudley? I can't support it! I shall faint! You've killed me, you vile man! I never shall survive it!

Var. Look'e there now: I protest, I thought you would have rejoiced at being clear of the incumbrance.

L. Ruf. 'Tis false; 'tis all a forgery, concerted between you and Dudley; why else did I never hear of it before?

Var. Have patience, my lady, and I'll tell you. —By Sir Oliver's direction, I was to deliver this will into no hands but his grandson, Dudley's: the young gentleman happened to be then in Scotland; I was dispatch'd thither in search of him: the hurry and fatigue of my journey brought on a fever by the way, which confined me in extreme danger for several days; upon my recovery, I pursued my journey, found young Dudley had left Scotland in the interim, and am now directed hither; where, as soon as I can find him, doubtless, I shall discharge my conscience, and fulfil my commission.

L. Ruf. Dudley then, as yet, knows nothing of this will?

Var. Nothing; that secret rests with me.

L. Ruf. A thought occurs: by this fellow's talking of his conscience, I should guess it was upon sale. [*Aside.*] Come, Mr. Varland, if 'tis as you say, I must submit. I was somewhat flurried at first, and forgot myself; I ask your pardon: this is no place to talk of business; step with me into my room; we will there compare the will, and resolve accordingly—Oh! would your fever had you, and I had your paper. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

Enter Miss RUSPORT, CHARLES, and O'FLAHERTY.

Char. So, so! My lady and her lawyer have retired to close confabulation: now, major, if you are the generous man I take you for, grant me one favour.

O'Fla. Faith will I, and not think much of my generosity neither; for, though it may not be in my power to do the favour you ask, look you, it can never be in my heart to refuse it.

Charles. Cou'd this man's tongue do justice to his thoughts, how eloquent would he be! [*Aside.*]

Char. Plant yourself then in that room: keep guard, for a few moments, upon the enemy's motions, in the chamber beyond; and, if they should attempt a sally, stop their march a moment, till your friend here can make good his retreat down the back stairs.

O'Fla. A word to the wife! I'm an old campaigner; make the best use of your time; and trust me for tying the old cat up to the picket.

Char. Hush! hush! not so loud.

Charles. 'Tis the office of a centinel, major, you have undertaken, rather than that of a field-officer.

O'Fla. 'Tis the office of a friend, my dear boy; and therefore no disgrace to a general. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII.

Enter CHARLES and CHARLOTTE.

Char. Well, Charles, will you commit yourself to me for a few minutes?

Charles. Most readily; and let me, before one goes by, tender you the only payment I can ever make for your abundant generosity.

Char. Hold, hold! so vile a thing as money must not come between us. What shall I say! O Charles! O Dudley! What difficulties have you thrown upon me; Familiarly as we have lived I shrink not at what I'm doing; and, anxiously as I have sought this opportunity, my fears almost persuade me to abandon it.

Charles. You alarm me.

Char. Your looks and actions have been so distant, and at this moment are so deterring, that, was it not for the hope that delicacy, and not disgust, inspires this conduct in you, I should sink with shame and apprehension: but time presses, and I must speak—and plainly too—Was you now in possession of your grandfather's estate, as justly you ought to be; and, was you inclined to seek a com-

panion for life, should you, or should you not, in that case, honour your unworthy Charlotte with your choice?

Charles. My unworthy Charlotte! So judge me Heaven, there is not a circumstance on earth so valuable as your happiness, so dear to me as your person; but to bring poverty, disgrace, reproach from friends, ridicule from all the world, upon a generous benefactress; thievishly to steal into an open, unserved, ingenuous heart, O Charlotte! dear, unhappy girl, it is not to be done.

Char. Nay, now you rate too highly the poor advantages fortune alone has given me over you: how otherwise could we bring our merits to any balance? Come, my dear Charles, I have enough; make that enough still more, by sharing it with me: sole heiress of my father's fortune, a short time will put it in my disposal; in the mean while you will be sent to join your regiment: let us prevent a separation, by setting out this very night for that happy country where marriage still is free: carry me this moment to Belcour's lodgings.

Charles. Belcour's?—The name is ominous; there's murder in it: bloody inexorable honour! [*Aside.*]

Char. D'ye pause? Put me into his hands, while you provide the means for our escape: he is the most generous, the most honourable of men.

Charles. Honourable! most honourable!

Char. Can you doubt it? Do you demur? Have you forgot your letter? Why, Belcour 'twas that prompted me to this proposal, that promised to supply the means, that nobly offered his unask'd assistance——

Enter O'FLAHERTY, hastily.

O'Fla. Run, run, for holy St. Antony's sake, to horse and away! The conference is broke up, and the old lady advances upon a full Piedmontese trot, within pistol-shot of your encampment.

Char. Here, here, down the back-stairs! O Charles, remember me!

Charles. Farewell! Now, now I feel myself a coward. [Exit.]

Char. What does he mean?

O'Fla. Ask no questions, but be gone: she has cooled the lad's courage, and wonders he feels like a coward. There's a damn'd deal of mischief brewing between this hyena and her lawyer: egad I'll step behind this screen and listen: a good soldier must sometimes fight in ambush as well as open field. [Retires.]

SCENE IX.

Lady RUSPORT and VARLAND.

L. Rusf. Sure I heard somebody. Hark! No; only the servants going down the back-stairs. Well, Mr. Varland, I think then we are agreed: you'll take my money; and your conscience no longer stands in your way.

Var. Your father was my benefactor; his will ought to be sacred; but, if I commit it to the flames, how will he be the wiser? Dudley, 'tis true, has done me no harm; but five thousand pounds will

do me much good: so, in short, madam, I take your offer; I will confer with my clerk, who witnessed the will: and to-morrow morning put it into your hands, upon condition you put five thousand good pounds into mine.

L. Ruf. 'Tis a bargain: I'll be ready for you: farewell.

[*Exit.*

Var. Let me consider—Five thousand pounds prompt payment for destroying this scrap of paper, not worth five farthings; 'tis a fortune easily earned; yes; and 'tis another man's fortune easily thrown away: 'tis a good round sum to be paid down at once for a bribe; but 'tis a damned rogue's trick in me to take it.

O'Fla. So, so! this fellow speaks truth to himself, though he lies to other people—But hush!

[*Aside.*

Var. 'Tis breaking the trust of my benefactor; that's a foul crime; but he's dead, and can never reproach me with it: and 'tis robbing young Dudley of his lawful patrimony; that's a hard case; but he's alive, and knows nothing of the matter.

O'Fla. These lawyers are so used to bring off the rogueries of others, that they are never without an excuse for their own.

[*Aside.*

Var. Were I assured now that Dudley would give me half the money for producing this will, that Lady Rusport does for concealing it, I would deal with him, and be an honest man at half price; I wish every gentleman of my profession could lay his hand on his heart and say the same thing.

O'Fla. A bargain, old gentleman! Nay, never start nor stare, you wasn't afraid of your own conscience, never be afraid of me.

Var. Of you, fir; who are you, pray?

O'Fla. I'll tell you who I am: you seem to wish to be honest, but want the heart to set about it; now I am the very man in the world to make you so; for, if you do not give me up that paper this very instant, by the soul of me, fellow, I will not leave one whole bone in your skin that sha'n't be broken.

Var. What right have you, pray, to take this paper from me?

O'Fla. What right have you, pray, to keep it from young Dudley? I don't know what it contains, but I am apt to think it will be safer in my hands than in yours; therefore give it me without more words, and save yourself a beating: do now, you had best.

Var. Well, fir, I may as well make a grace of necessity. There! I have acquitted my conscience, at the expence of five thousand pounds.

O'Fla. Five thousand pounds! Mercy upon me! —Where there are such temptations in the law, can we wonder if some of the corps are a disgrace to it?

Var. Well, you have got the paper; if you are an honest man, give it to Charles Dudley.

O'Fla. An honest man! look at me, friend, I am a soldier, this is not the livery of a knave; I am an Irishman, honey, mine is not the country of dishonour. Now, firrah, be gone; if you enter these doors, or give Lady Rusport the least item of what has passed, I will cut off both your ears, and rob the pillory of its due.

Var. I wish I was once fairly out of his sight.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE X.

A Room in STOCKWELL's House. Enter STOCKWELL.

Stock. I must disclose myself to Belcour; this noble instance of his generosity, which old Dudley has been relating, allies me to him at once; concealment becomes too painful; I shall be proud to own him for my son——But see, he's here.

BELCOUR enters, and throws himself upon a sofa.

Bel. O my curst tropical constitution! Would to Heaven I had been dropt upon the snows of Lapland, and never felt the blessed influence of the sun, so I had never burnt with these inflammatory passions!

Stock. So, so, you seem disordered, Mr. Belcour?

Bel. Disorder'd, sir! Why did I ever quit the soil in which I grew? what evil planet drew me from that warm sunny region, where naked nature walks without disguise, into this cold, contriving, artificial country.

Stock. Come, sir, you've met a rascal—what of that? general conclusions are illiberal.

Bel. No, sir, I've met reflection by the way; I've come from folly, noise, and fury, and met a silent monitor—Well, well, a villain—'twas not to be pardoned—pray never mind me, sir.

Stock. Alas, my heart bleeds for him!

Bel. And yet I might have heard him: now plague upon that blundering Irishman for coming in as he did; the hurry of the deed might palliate the

event : deliberate execution has less to plead—Mr. Stockwell, I am bad company to you.

Stock. Oh, sir, make no excuse. I think you have not found me forward to pry into the secrets of your pleasures and pursuits; 'tis not my disposition; but there are times, when want of curiosity would be want of friendship.

Bel. Ah, sir, mine is a case wherein you and I shall never think alike; the punctilious rules, by which I am bound, are not to be found in your ledgers, nor will pass current in the computing-house of a trader.

Stock. 'Tis very well, sir: if you think I can render you any service, it will be worth your trial to confide in me; if not, your secret is safer in your own bosom.

Bel. That sentiment demands my confidence: pray, sit down by me. You must know, I have an affair of honour on my hands with young Dudley; and, though I put up with no man's insult, yet I wish to take away no man's life.

Stock. I know the young man, and am apprised of your generosity to his father: what can have bred a quarrel between you?

Bel. A foolish passion on my side, and a haughty provocation on his. There is a girl, Mr. Stockwell, whom I have unfortunately seen, of most uncommon beauty; she has withal an air of so much natural modesty, that had I not had good assurance of her being an attainable wanton, I declare I should as soon have thought of attempting the chastity of Diana.

Enter Servant.

Stock. Hey-day, do you interrupt us?

Serv. Sir, there's an Irish gentleman will take no denial; he says he must see Mr. Belcour directly, upon business of the last consequence.

Bel. Admit him: 'tis the Irish officer that parted us, and brings me young Dudley's challenge: I should have made a long story of it, and he'll tell you in three words.

Enter O'FLAHERTY.

O'Fla. Save you, my dear: and you, fir! I have a little bit of a word in private for you.

Bel. Pray deliver your commands: this gentleman is my intimate friend.

O'Fla. Why then, Ensign Dudley will be glad to measure swords with you, yonder, at the London Tavern, in Bishopsgate-street, at nine o'clock—you know the place.

Bel. I do; and shall observe the appointment.

O'Fla. Will you be of the party, fir? We shall want a fourth hand.

Stock. Savage as the custom is, I close with your proposal; and, though I am not fully informed of the occasion of your quarrel, I shall rely on Mr. Belcour's honour for the justice of it; and willingly stake my life in his defence.

O'Fla. Sir, you're a gentleman of honour, and I shall be glad of being better known to you—But hark'e, Belcour, I had like to have forgot part of my errand: there is the money you gave old Dudley; you may tell it over, 'faith; 'tis a receipt

in full : now the lad can put you to death with a safe conscience; and when he has done that job for you, let it be a warning how you attempt the sister of a man of honour.

Bel. The sister !

O'Fla. Ay, the sister; 'tis English, is it not? Or Irish; 'tis all one : you understand me, his sister, or Louisa Dudley, that's her name, I think, call her which you will: by St. Patrick, 'tis a foolish piece of business, Belcour, to go about to take away a poor girl's virtue from her, when there are so many to be met in this town, who have disposed of theirs to your hands. [Exit.]

Stock. Why, I am thunderstruck. What is it you have done, and what is the shocking business in which I have engaged? If I understood him right, 'tis the sister of young Dudley you've been attempting: you talked to me of a profest wanton: the girl he speaks of has beauty enough indeed to inflame your desires, but she has honour, innocence, and simplicity, to awe the most licentious passion: if you have done that, Mr. Belcour, I renounce you, I abandon you, I forswear all fellowship or friendship with you for ever.

Bel. Have patience for a moment: we do indeed speak of the same person—but she is not innocent, she is not young Dudley's sister.

Stock. Astonishing! Who told you this?

Bel. The woman where she lodges; the person who put me on the pursuit, and contrived our meetings.

Stock. What woman? what person?

Bel. Fulmer her name is; I warrant you I did not proceed without good grounds.

Stock. Fulmer! Fulmer——Who waits?

Enter a Servant.

Send Mr. Stukely hither directly. I begin to see my way into this dark transaction. Mr. Belcour, Mr. Belcour, you are no match for the cunning and contrivances of this intriguing town.

Enter STUKELY.

Pr'ythee, Stukely, what is the name of the woman and her husband, who were stop't upon suspicion of selling stolen diamonds at our next-door neighbour's, the jeweller?

Stuke. Fulmer.

Stock. So!

Bel. Can you procure me a sight of those diamonds?

Stuke. They are now in my hand; I was desired to shew them to Mr. Stockwell.

Stock. Give 'em to me: what do I see? As I live, the very diamonds Miss Rusport sent hither, and which I intrusted to you to return.

Bel. Yes, but I betrayed that trust, and gave them to Mrs. Fulmer to present to Miss Dudley.

Stock. With a view, no doubt, to bribe her to compliance.

Bel. I own it.

Stock. For shame, for shame; and 'twas this woman's intelligence you relied upon for Miss Dudley's character?

Bel. I thought she knew her; by Heaven, I would have died sooner than have insulted a woman of virtue, or a man of honour.

Stock. I think you would: but mark the danger of licentious courses: you are betrayed, robbed, abused, and, but for this providential discovery, in a fair way of being sent out of the world with all your follies on your head——Dear Stukely, go to my neighbour, tell him I have an owner for the jewels, and beg him to carry the people under custody to the London Tavern, and wait for me there.——[*Exit Stukely.*]——I fear the law does not provide a punishment to reach the villany of these people; but how, in the name of wonder, could you take any thing on the word of such an informer?

Bel. Because I had not lived long enough in your country to know how few informers' words are to be taken; persuaded however as I was of Miss Dudley's guilt, I must own to you I was staggered with the appearance of such innocence, especially when I saw her admitted into Miss Rusport's company.

Stock. Good Heaven! did you meet her at Miss Rusport's, and could you doubt her being a woman of reputation?

Bel. By you, perhaps, such a mistake could not have been made; but in a perfect stranger I hope it is venial. I did not know what artifices young Dudley might have used to conceal her character; I did not know what disgrace attended the detection of it.

Stock. I see it was a trap laid for you, which you have narrowly escaped; you addressed a woman of honour with all the loose incense of a profane ad-

mirer, and you have drawn upon you the resentment of a man of honour, who thinks himself bound to protect her.—Well, sir, you must atone for this mistake.

Bel. To the lady the most penitent submission I can make is justly due; but, in the execution of an act of justice, it shall never be said my soul was swayed by the least particle of fear: I have received a challenge from her brother; now, though I would give my fortune, almost my life itself, to purchase her happiness, yet I cannot abate her one scruple of my honour; I have been branded with the name of villain.

Stock. Ay, sir, you mistook her character, and he mistook yours; error begets error.

Bel. Villain, Mr. Stockwell, is a harsh word.

Stock. It is a harsh word, and should be unsaid.

Bel. Come, come, it shall be unsaid.

Stock. Or else what follows? Why the sword is drawn, and to heal the wrongs you have done to the reputation of the sister, you make an honourable amends by murdering the brother.

Bel. Murdering!

Stock. 'Tis thus religion writes and speaks the word; in the vocabulary of modern honour there is no such term—But come, I don't despair of satisfying the one without alarming the other; that done, I have a discovery to unfold, that you will then, I hope, be fitted to receive.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V. SCENE I.

The London Tavern. Enter O'FLAHERTY, STOCKWELL, CHARLES, and BELCOUR.

O'Flaherty:

GENTLEMEN, well met! you understand each other's minds, and as I see you have brought nothing but your swords, you may set to without any further ceremony.

Stock. You will not find us backward in any worthy cause; but before we proceed any further, I would ask this young gentleman, whether he has any explanation to require of Mr. Belcour.

Charles. Of Mr. Belcour none; his actions speak for themselves: but to you, sir, I would fain propose one question.

Stock. Name it.

Charles. How is it, Mr. Stockwell, that I meet a man of your character on this ground?

Stock. I will answer you directly, and my answer shall not displease you. I come hither in defence of the reputation of Miss Dudley, to redress the injuries of an innocent young lady.

O'Fla. By my soul the man knows he's to fight, only he mistakes which side he's to be of.

Stock. You are about to draw your sword to refute a charge against your sister's honour; you would do well, if there were no better means within reach: but the proofs of her innocence are lodg'd in our bosoms, and if we fall, you destroy the evidence that most effectually can clear her fame.

Charles. How's that, fir?

Stock. This gentleman could best explain it to you, but you have given him an undeserved name that seals his lips against you: I am not under the same inhibition, and if your anger can keep cool for a few minutes, I desire I may call in two witnesses, who will solve all difficulties at once. Here, waiter! bring those people in that are without.

O'Fla. Out upon it, what need is there for so much talking about the matter? can't you settle your differences first, and dispute about 'em afterwards?

FULMER and Mrs. FULMER brought in.

Charles. Fulmer and his wife in custody?

Stock. Yes, fir; these are your honest landlord and landlady, now in custody for defrauding this gentleman of certain diamonds intended to have been presented to your sister. Be so good, Mrs. Fulmer, to inform the company why you so grossly scandaliz'd the reputation of an innocent lady, by persuading Mr. Belcour that Miss Dudley was not the sister, but the mistress, of this gentleman.

Mrs. Ful. Sir, I don't know what right you have to question me, and I shall not answer till I see occasion.

Stock. Had you been as silent heretofore, madam, it would have saved you some trouble; but we don't want your confession. This letter, which you wrote to Mr. Belcour, will explain your design; and these diamonds, which of right belong to Miss Rusport, will confirm your guilt: the law, Mrs. Fulmer,

will make you speak, tho' I cann't. Constable, take charge of your prisoners.

Ful. Hold a moment, Mr. Stockwell, you are a gentleman that knows the world, and a member of parliament; we shall not attempt to impose upon you; we know we are open to the law, and we know the utmost it can do against us. Mr. Belcour has been ill used to be sure, and so has Miss Dudley: and, for my own part, I always condemn'd the plot as a very foolish plot, but it was a child of Mrs. Fulmer's brain, and she would not be put out of conceit with it.

Mrs. Ful. You are a very foolish man, Mr. Fulmer, so pr'ythee hold your tongue.

Ful. Therefore, as I was saying, if you send her to Bridewell, it won't be amiss; and if you give her a little wholesome discipline, she may be the better for that too: but for me, Mr. Stockwell, who am a man of letters, I must beseech you, sir, not to bring any disgrace upon my profession.

Stock. 'Tis you, Mr. Fulmer, not I, that disgrace your profession, therefore begone, nor expect that I will betray the interests of mankind so far as to shew favour to such incendiaries. Take 'em away; I blush to think such wretches should have the power to set two honest men at variance.

[*Exeunt Fulmer, &c.*]

Charles. Mr. Belcour, we have mistaken each other; let us exchange forgiveness. I am convinced you intended no affront to my sister, and ask your pardon for the expression I was betrayed into.

Bel. 'Tis enough, sir; the error began on my side, and was Miss Dudley here, I would be the first to atone.

Stock. Let us all adjourn to my house, and conclude the evening like friends: you will find a little entertainment ready for you; and, if I am not mistaken, Miss Dudley and her father will make part of our company. Come, major, do you consent?

O'Fla. Most readily, Mr. Stockwell; a quarrel well made-up, is better than a victory hardly earned. Give me your hand, Belcour; o' my conscience you are too honest for the country you live in. And now, my dear lad, since peace is concluded on all sides, I have a discovery to make to you, which you must find out for yourself, for deuce take me if I rightly comprehend it, only that your aunt Rusport is in a conspiracy against you, and a vile rogue of a lawyer, whose name I forget, at the bottom of it.

Charles. What conspiracy? Dear major, recollect yourself.

O'Fla. By my soul, I've no faculty at recollecting myself; but I've a paper somewhere about me, that will tell you more of the matter than I can. When I get to the merchant's, I will endeavour to find it.

Charles. Well, it must be in your own way; but I confess you have thoroughly roused my curiosity.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Stockwell's House. Enter Captain DUDLEY, LOUISA, and STUKELY.

Dud. And are those wretches, Fulmer and his wife, in safe custody?

Stuke. They are in good hands, I accompanied them to the tavern, where your son was to be, and then went in search of you. You may be sure Mr. Stockwell will enforce the law against them as far as it will go.

Dud. What mischief might their cursed machinations have produced, but for this timely discovery!

Lou. Still I am terrified; I tremble with apprehension lest Mr. Belcour's impetuosity and Charles's spirit should not wait for an explanation, but drive them both to extremes, before the mistake can be unravell'd.

Stuke. Mr. Stockwell is with them, madam, and you have nothing to fear; you cannot suppose he wou'd ask you hither for any other purpose but to celebrate their reconciliation, and to receive Mr. Belcour's atonement.

Dud. No, no, Louisa, Mr. Stockwell's honour and discretion guard us against all danger or offence; he well knows we will endure no imputation on the honour of our family, and he certainly has invited us to receive satisfaction on that score in an amicable way.

Lou. Wou'd to Heaven they were return'd!

Stuke. You may expect them every minute; and see madam, agreeable to your wish, they are here.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Enter CHARLES, and afterwards STOCKWELL and O'FLAHERTY.

Lou. O Charles, O brother, how cou'd you serve me so, how cou'd you tell me you was going to Lady Rusport's, and then set out with a design of fighting Mr. Belcour? But where is he? Where is your antagonist?

Stock. Captain, I am proud to see you; and you, Miss Dudley, do me particular honour. We have been adjusting, sir, a very extraordinary and dangerous mistake, which I take for granted my friend Stukely has explain'd to you.

Dud. He has; I have too good an opinion of Mr. Belcour to believe he cou'd be guilty of a designed affront to an innocent girl, and I am much too well acquainted with your character to suppose you cou'd abet him in such design; I have no doubt, therefore, all things will be set to rights in very few words, when we have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Belcour.

Stock. He has only slept into the compting-house, and will wait upon you directly. You will not be over strict, madam, in weighing Mr. Belcour's conduct to the minutest scruple; his manners, passions, and opinions are not as yet assimilated to this climate; he comes amongst you a new character, an inhabitant of a new world, and both hospitality, as well as pity, recommend him to our indulgence.

SCENE IV.

Enter BELCOUR, who bows to Miss DUDLEY.

Bel. I am happy and ashamed to see you; no man in his senses would offend you; I forfeited mine, and err'd against the light of the sun, when I overlook'd your virtues; but your beauty was predominant, and hid them from my sight: I now perceive I was the dupe of a most improbable report, and humbly entreat your pardon.

Lou. Think no more of it; 'twas a mistake.

Bel. My life has been composed of little else; 'twas founded in mystery, and has continued in error: I was once given to hope, Mr. Stockwell, that you was to have deliver'd me from these difficulties; but either I do not deserve your confidence, or I was deceiv'd in my expectations.

Stock. When this lady has confirm'd your pardon, I shall hold you deserving of my confidence.

Lou. That was granted the moment it was ask'd.

Bel. To prove my title to his confidence, honour me so far with yours, as to allow me a few minutes conversation in private with you.

[She turns to her father.]

Dud. By all means, Louisa; come, Mr. Stockwell, let us go into another room.

Charles. And now, Major O'Flaherty, I claim your promise of a sight of the paper, that is to unravel this conspiracy of my aunt Rusport's: I think I have waited with great patience.

O'Fla. I have been endeavouring to call to mind what it was I overheard; I've got the paper, and will give you the best account I can of the whole transaction. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V.

Enter BELCOUR and LOUISA.

Bel. Miss Dudley, I have solicited this audience, to repeat to you my penitence and confusion. How shall I atone? What reparation can I make to you and virtue?

Lou. To me there's nothing due, nor any thing demanded of you but your more favourable opinion for the future, if you should chance to think of me. Upon the part of virtue I'm not empower'd to speak; but if hereafter, as you range thro' life, you should surprize her in the person of some wretched female, poor as myself, and not so well protected, enforce not your advantage, complete not your licentious triumph, but raise her, rescue her from shame and sorrow, and reconcile her to herself again.

Bel. I will, I will: by bearing your idea ever present in my thoughts, virtue shall keep an advocate within me. But tell me, loveliest, when you pardon the offence, can you, all perfect as you are, approve of the offender? As I now cease to view you in that false light I lately did, can you, and in the fulness of your bounty will you, cease also to reflect upon the libertine addresses I have paid you, and

look upon me as your reformed, your rational admirer?

Lou. Are sudden reformatations apt to last? and how can I be sure the first fair face you meet will not ensnare affections so unsteady, and that I shall not lose you lightly as I gained you?

Bel. Because, though you conquered me by surprise, I have no inclination to rebel; because, since the first moment that I saw you, every instant has improved you in my eyes, because by principle as well as passion I am unalterably yours: in short, there are ten thousand causes for my love to you:—would to Heaven I could plant one in your soft bosom, that might move you to return it.

Lou. Nay, Mr. Belcour—

Bel. I know I am not worthy your regard; I know I'm tainted with a thousand faults, sick of a thousand follies; but there's a healing virtue in your eyes that makes recovery certain; I cannot be a villain in your arms.

Lou. That you can never be: whomever you shall honour with your choice, my life upon't that woman will be happy: it is not from suspicion that I hesitate, it is from honour: 'tis the severity of my condition, it is the world, that never will interpret fairly in our case.

Bel. Oh, what am I? and who in this wide world concerns himself for such a nameless, such a friendless thing as I am? I see, Miss Dudley, I've not yet obtained your pardon.

Lou. Nay, that you are in full possession of.

Bel. Oh, seal it with your hand then, loveliest of women, confirm it with your heart; make me ho-

nourably happy, and crown your penitent, not with your pardon only, but your love.

Lou. My love!

Bel. By Heaven, my soul is conquered with your virtues more than my eyes are ravished with your beauty. Oh, may this soft, this sensitive alarm be happy, be auspicious! Doubt not, deliberate not, delay not. If happiness be the end of life, why do we slip a moment?

SCENE VI.

Enter O'FLAHERTY, and afterwards DUDLEY and CHARLES with STOCKWELL.

O'Fla. Joy, joy, joy! Sing, dance, leap, laugh for joy! Ha' done making love, and fall down on your knees to every saint in the calendar; for they're all on your side, and honest St. Patrick at the head of them.

Charles. O Louisa, such an event! By the luckiest chance in life we have discovered a will of my grandfather's made in his last illness, by which he cuts off my aunt Rusport with a small annuity, and leaves me heir to his whole estate, with a fortune of fifteen thousand pounds to yourself.

Lou. What is it you tell me? O sir, instruct me to support this unexpected turn of fortune.

[*To her father.*

Dud. Name not fortune; 'tis the work of Providence—'tis the justice of Heaven, that would not

suffer innocence to be oppressed, nor your base aunt to prosper in her cruelty and cunning.

[*A Servant whispers Belcour, and he goes out.*]

O'Fla. You shall pardon me, Captain Dudley, but you must not overlook St. Patrick neither; for, by my soul, if he had not put it into my head to slip behind the screen when your righteous aunt and the lawyer were plotting together, I don't see how you would ever have come at the paper there, that Master Stockwell is reading.

Dud. True, my good friend, you are the father of this discovery; but how did you contrive to get this will from the lawyer?

O'Fla. By force, my dear—the only way of getting any thing from a lawyer's clutches.

Stock. Well, major, when he brings his action of assault and battery against you, the least Dudley can do is, to defend you with the weapons you have put into his hands.

Charles. That I am bound to do; and after the happiness I shall have in sheltering a father's age from the vicissitudes of life, my next delight will be in offering you an asylum in the bosom of your country.

O'Fla. And upon my soul, my dear, 'tis high time I was there; for 'tis now thirty long years since I sat foot in my native country—and by the power of St. Patrick I swear I think it's worth all the rest of the world put together.

Dud. Ay, major, much about that time have I been beating the round of service, and 'twere well for us both to give over: we have stood many a tough gale, and abundance of hard blows; but

Charles shall lay us up in a little private, but safe, harbour, where we'll rest from our labours, and peacefully wind up the remainder of our days.

O'Fla. Agreed: and you may take it as a proof of my esteem, young man, that Major O'Flaherty accepts a favour at your hands—for by Heaven I'd sooner starve, than say 'I thank you' to the man I despise. But I believe you are an honest lad, and I'm glad you've trounced the old cat—for on my conscience I believe I must otherwise have married her myself, to have let you in for a share of her fortune.

Stock. Hey-day, what's become of Belcour?

Lou. One of your servants called him out just now, and seemingly on some earnest occasion.

Stock. I hope, Miss Dudley, he has atoned to you as a gentleman ought.

Lou. Mr. Belcour, sir, will always do what a gentleman ought—and in my case I fear only you will think he has done too much.

Stock. What has he done; and what can be too much? Pray Heaven it may be as I wish. [*Aside.*]

Dud. Let us hear it, child.

Lou. With confusion for my own unworthiness, I confess to you he has offered me——

Stock. Himself.

Lou. 'Tis true.

Stock. Then I am happy: all my doubts, my cares are over, and I may own him for my son.—— Why these are joyful tidings: come, my good friend, assist me in disposing your lovely daughter to accept this returning prodigal; he is no unprincipled, no

hardened libertine; his love for you and virtue is the same.

Dud. 'Twere vile ingratitude in me to doubt his merit—What says my child?

O'Fla. Begging your pardon now, 'tis a frivolous sort of a question, that of yours; for you may see plainly enough by the young lady's looks, that she says a great deal, although she speaks never a word.

Charles. Well, sister, I believe the major has fairly interpreted the state of your heart.

Lou. I own it; and what must that heart be, which love, honour, and beneficence like Mr. Belcour's can make no impression on?

Stock. I thank you. What happiness has this hour brought to pass!

O'Fla. Why don't we all sit down to supper, then, and make a night on't?

Stock. Hold, here comes Belcour.

SCENE VII.

BELCOUR introducing Miss RUSPORT.

Bel. Mr. Dudley, here is a fair refugee, who properly comes under your protection: she is equipt for Scotland; but your good fortune, which I have related to her, seems inclined to save you both the journey——Nay, madam, never go back; you are amongst friends.

Charles. Charlotte!

Char. The same; that fond officious girl, that haunts you every where; that persecuting spirit——

Charles. Say rather, that protecting angel; such you have been to me.

Char. O Charles, you have an honest, but proud heart.

Charles. Nay, chide me not, dear Charlotte.

Bel. Seal up her lips then: she is an adorable girl; her arms are open to you; and love and happiness are ready to receive you.

Charles. Thus then I claim my dear, my destin'd wife. [Embracing her.]

SCENE VIII.

Enter Lady RUSPORT.

L. Ruf. Hey-day! mighty fine! wife truly! mighty well! kissing, embracing—did ever any thing equal this?—Why, you shameless huffy!—But I won't condescend to waste a word upon you.—You, fir, you, Mr. Stockwell, you fine, sanctified, fair-dealing man of conscience, is this the principle you trade upon? Is this your neighbourly system, to keep a house of reception for run-away daughters, and young beggarly fortune-hunters?

O'Fla. Be advised now, and don't put yourself in such a passion: we were all very happy till you came.

L. Ruf. Stand away, fir; hav'n't I reason to be in a passion?

O'Fla. Indeed, honey, and you have, if you knew all.

L. Ruf. Come, madam, I have found out your haunts; dispose yourself to return home with me.

Young man, let me never see you within my doors again. Mr. Stockwell, I shall report your behaviour, depend on it.

Stock. Hold, madam; I cannot consent to lose Miss Rusport's company this evening, and I am persuaded you won't insist upon it: 'tis an unmotherly action to interrupt your daughter's happiness in this manner, believe me it is.

L. Ruf. Her happiness, truly; upon my word! and I suppose it's an unmotherly action to interrupt her ruin; for what but ruin must it be to marry a beggar?—I think my sister had a proof of that, sir, when she made choice of you. [*To Captain Dudley.*

Dud. Don't be too lavish of your spirits, Lady Rusport.

O'Fla. By my soul you'll have occasion for a sip of the cordial Elixir, by-and-bye.

Stock. It don't appear to me, madam, that Mr. Dudley can be called a beggar.

L. Ruf. But it appears to me, Mr. Stockwell—I am apt to think a pair of colours cannot furnish settlement quite sufficient for the heiress of Sir Stephen Rusport.

Char. But a good estate in aid of a commission may do something.

L. Ruf. A good estate, truly! where should he get a good estate, pray?

Stock. Why suppose now a worthy old gentleman, on his death-bed, should have taken it in mind to leave him one——

L. Ruf. Ha! what's that you say?

O'Fla. O ho! you begin to smell a plot, do you?

Stock. Suppose there should be a paper in the world that runs thus——‘I do hereby give and bequeath all my estates, real and personal, to Charles Dudley, son of my late daughter Louisa,’ &c. &c. &c.

L. Ruf. Why I am thunderstruck!—By what contrivance, what villany did you get possession of that paper?

Stock. There was no villany, madam, in getting possession of it; the crime was in concealing it, none in bringing it to light.

L. Ruf. Oh, that cursed lawyer, Varland!

O’Fla. You may say that, faith, he is a cursed lawyer, and a cursed piece of work I had to get the paper from him. Your ladyship now was to have paid him five thousand pounds for it—I forced him to give it me of his own accord, for nothing at all, at all.

L. Ruf. Is it you that have done this? Am I foiled by your blundering contrivances, after all?

O’Fla. ’Twas a blunder, faith, but as natural a one as if I had made it o’ purpose.

Charles. Come, let us not oppress the fallen; do right even now, and you shall have no cause to complain.

L. Ruf. Am I become an object of your pity, then?—Insufferable!—Confusion light amongst you!—Marry and be wretched! let me never see you more. [Exit.

Char. She is outrageous; I suffer for her, and blush to see her thus exposed.

Charles. Come, Charlotte, don’t let this angry woman disturb our happiness: we will save her in

spite of herself; your father's memory shall not be stained by the discredit of his second choice.

Char. I trust implicitly to your discretion, and am in all things yours.

Bel. Now, lovely but obdurate, does not this example soften?

Lou. What can you ask for more? Accept my hand, accept my willing heart.

Bel. O bliss unutterable! brother, father, friend, and you, the author of this general joy—

O' Fla. Blessing of St. Patrick upon us all! 'Tis a night of wonderful and surprising ups and downs: I wish we were all fairly set down to supper, and there was an end on't.

Stock. Hold for a moment! I have yet one word to interpose—Intitled by my friendship to a voice in your disposal, I have approved your match: there yet remains a father's consent to be obtained.

Bel. Have I a father?

Stock. You have a father: did not I tell you I had a discovery to make? Compose yourself; you have a father, who observes, who knows, who loves you.

Bel. Keep me no longer in suspense: my heart is softened for the affecting discovery, and nature fits me to receive his blessing.

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. My father! Do I live?

Stock. I am your father.

Bel. It is too much; my happiness o'erpowers me: to gain a friend and find a father is too much: I blush to think how little I deserve you.

[*They embrace.*]

Dud. See, children, how many new relations spring from this night's unforeseen events, to endear us to each other.

O'Fla. O' my conscience, I think we shall be all related by-and-bye.

Stock. How happily has this evening concluded, and yet how threatening was its approach! Let us repair to the supper-room, where I will unfold to you every circumstance of my mysterious story. Yes, Belcour, I have watched you with a patient, but enquiring eye, and I have discovered, through the veil of some irregularities, a heart beaming with benevolence, an animated nature, fallible indeed, but not incorrigible: and your election of this excellent young lady makes me glory in acknowledging you to be my son.

Bel. I thank you—and in my turn glory in the father I have gained: sensibly imprest with gratitude for such extraordinary dispensations, I beseech you, amiable Louisa, for the time to come, whenever you perceive me deviating into error or offence, bring only to my mind the Providence of this night, and I will turn to reason, and obey.



EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

Spoken by Mrs. ABINGTON.

The Lines in Italics are to be spoken in a catechise Tone.

CONFESS, good folks, has not Miss Rusport shewn
Strange whims for SEVENTEEN HUNDRED SEVEN-
TY-ONE?

What, pawn her jewels—There's a precious plan!—
To extricate from want a brave *old* man;
And fall in love with poverty and honour—
A girl of fortune, fashion?—Fie upon her.
But do not think we females of the stage,
So dead to the refinements of the age,
That we agree with our old-fashion'd poet:
I am point-blank against him, and I'll shew it:
And that my tongue may more politely run,
Make me a lady—Lady Blabington.
Now, with a rank and title to be free,
I'll make a catechism—and you shall see
What is the *veritable beaume de vie*:
As I change place I stand for that, or this—
My Lady questions first—then answers Miss.

[*She speaks as my Lady.*]

'Come, tell me, child, what were our modes and
'dress,

'In those strange times of that old fright, Queen

'Befs?'—

And now for Miss——

[*She changes place, and speaks for Miss.*]

*When Bess was England's queen,
Ladies were dismal beings, seldom seen ;
They rose betimes, and breakfasted as soon
On beef and beer—then studied Greek till noon :
Unpainted cheeks with blush of health did glow,
Beruff'd and fardingal'd from top to toe,
Nor necks, nor ancles, would they ever shew.*

Learnt Greek !—[*Laughs.*]—Our outside head takes
half a day ;

Have we much time to dress the *inside*, pray ?
No heads dress'd à-la-Greque ; the ancients quote,
There may be learning in a *papillote* :
Cards are *our* classics ; and I, Lady B,
In learning will not yield to any she
Of the late *founded* female university.
But now for Lady Blab——

[*Speaks as my Lady.*]

'Tell me, Miss Nancy,
'What sports and what employments did they
'fancy?'——

[*Speaks as Miss.*]

*The vulgar creatures seldom left their houses,
But taught their children, work'd, and lov'd their
spouses ;
The use of cards at Christmas only knew,
They play'd for little, and their games were few,
One-and-thirty, Put, All-fours, and Lantera-loo.*

*They bore a race of mortals stout and boney,
And never heard the name of Macaroni.*

[*Speaks as my Lady.*]

- ‘Oh brava, brava! that’s my pretty dear!
‘Now let a modern, modish fair appear;
‘No more of these old dowdy maids and wives,
‘Tell how superior beings pass their lives.’

[*Speaks as Miss.*]

*Till noon they sleep, from noon till night they dress,
From night till morn they game it more or less,
Next night the same sweet course of joy run o’er,
Then the night after as the night before,
And the night after that, encore, encore!—*

[*She comes forward.*]

Thus with our cards we *shuffle* off all sorrow,
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow!
We *deal apace*, from youth unto our prime,
To the last moment of our *tabby* time;
And all our yesterdays, from rout and drum,
Have lighted fools with empty pockets home.
Thus do our lives with rapture roll away,
Not with the nonsense of our author’s play;
This is true life—true spirit—give it praise;
Don’t snarl and sigh for good Queen Bess’s days.
For all you look so sour, and bend the brow,
You all rejoice with me, you’re living now.



